BEING A GERMINAL OPEN-ENDED NOTEBOOK ON
AN EXPERIMENTAL ATTEMPT AT SYNERGETIC
EDUCATION AND TEMPORARY COMMUNITY

generated by: Clint Callahan III
Ed Clark
Phyllis Goldman
Al Friedman
Kat Felkner
and the members of the Thursday Night Meeting Group
1975-1976
Thanks to Chemelex division of Raychem, Inc.,
for allowing me to edit and final type this manuscript on their mini-computer during lunch break
and after hours.

This book is dedicated to all those daring souls
who helped make this dream come true,
and to my Beast,
who said next time she would join me.

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Brenda Star
Whatever you can do, or
dream you can, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power,
and magic in it.

—Goethe (29:303)
Please note that the following words have been used in these writings:

**enuf = enough**

**freek - see definition in PHILOSOPHY AND GAME PLAN section**

**to scrub - the art and science of locating, obtaining, and utilizing items that are useless in other people's eyes; recycling to fill a specific material need**

**hem = him/her**

**hes = his/her**

**hesh = he/she**

**hez = his/hers**

**shlok - any thick, sloppy food such as TVP (Textured Vegetable Protein) and noodles held together with some kind of viscous sauce, generally eaten from shlok bowls with sporks (spoon/forks)**

**shmek - waste material, generally moist and organic in nature**

**skoad - any junk food such as Twinkies, banana splits, candy; generally the "junkier" it is, the skoadier it is**

**tho = though**

**thru = through**
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In the Fall of 1975 five college students of various majors, ages, and sexes from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, set out in a 1965 Chevy Nova and a half-ton Toyota pick-up, filled to overflowing with supplies and equipment, on an adventure. Three months in the Mexican Outback, 6000 miles; and an incredible number of neural connections later they returned, tho not unchanged. This is the entire story: conception, pregnancy, birth, life, and the wisdom of hindsight inclusive. The students' goal was to set up a temporary extra-societal living environment for themselves, a space and place conducive to learning, studying, and practicing their particular interests, especially those subjects not presented in college classrooms and not studiable while busyness occupied their time.

They reached their goal.

Many people were involved in the exploration and ideation stages. Among them were: Bill Blakely, Robert Brady, Fred Burger, Clint Callahan III, Cathy Cheap, Ed Clark, Pat Cleary, Bill Cron, David Deweiss, Susannah Evans, Kat Felkner, Thom Fischer, Nan Fourie, Frank, Al Friedman, Phyllis Goldman, Tom Judd, Jenny Keys, Wayne Landis, Chuck Leik, Bud Martin, David Mitchell, John Monroe, Ken Nair, Jack Newberry, Carl Rosenbergs, Jim Straub, David Stull, Romer Taber, Kate Till, Ken Till, Chris Von Ry, Susan Wellbanks, Paul West, Jerry White, Deborah Williams, Glen Yamashita, Rick Young, and Greg Zaller. They came and went, spoke and participated as they pleased. The group lived by the will of the involved.

As planning for the expedition became more specific, more goal oriented, and as energies were directed towards the Fall Quarter Experience, a determined group gelled and centered its activities on the problems of exactly what, how, and where. There were no eliminations, no exclusions, no telling somebody hesh couldn't go for any reason. People chose to go if they were ready and it was right for them, and they didn't if they weren't or it wasn't. No bad vibes, no hassle. And those whose final decision was to go for it knew simply that it was exactly what they wanted to do. There ain't nuthin' at which a group so motivated can't succeed.

Each of the above named individuals added his unique spirit to the total production, and as creative, energetic, self-made, positive people they are definitely worth looking up and getting to know. Especially if you feel like doing something new and different, perhaps even a little strange. But in the end there were just five who finally decided to go. Because you'll be reading a lot about this dynamic quintet in the WHAT REALLY HAPPENED section, and because this is the INTRODUCTION, we've asked them each to introduce themselves:

**PHYLLIS GOLDMAN:**

To climb a mountain, forever searching, reaching higher every day,
But not searching for the top, for there is no top.

But looking for new caves to explore;
And flowers I've never seen before.

Hi. I'm Phyllis Goldman. I'm studying to be a life science expert. I only have 96 1/2 more years until graduation. A degree requires an enjoyable study of plants, birds, insects, animals, and people; life in action. Outdoor education, alternatively styled communities and high quality human interaction are a few life goals of mine.

I carry with me a special sparkle of energy for special environments and people who can step out of the norm and into a different realm of existence. One that adds mystery with enuf insecurity to add stimulation and a healthy fear.
Interested? If so, I would be.
Phyllis Goldman, 4949 Hayvenhurst Ave., Encino, California, 91436.

ED CLARK:

Ed Clark lives on a merry-go-round, studying the animals, keeping his balance, and listening to the music. His great ambition is to talk to the driver.

AL FRIEDMAN:

I am an electronic engineering student with something more than a short circuit between the headphones. After three years at Poly and a year in the aerospace farce, I have thrown down my textbooks, opened my eyes, taken a deep breath, and left security for a chance to grow. At 187 centimeters I’m still growing faster than ever, and see no end to it.
Al Friedman, 2080 Rosecrest Dr., Oakland, California, 94602.

CLINT CALLAHAN III:

KRONK! The cases one might use in trying to categorize me are: male, aries, 192 centimeters, 91 kilograms, blondish, hazel, B.S. Physics, 1975, Cal Poly, S.L.O., exploring, writing, filmmaking, cooking, survival camping, sewer ing, SCUBA diving, playing the flute.
However these cases are nearly useless, for I have discovered the key to their locks and spend much of my time on the Outside. I enjoy company there.
Clint Callahan III, 5561 Littlebow Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes, California, 90274.

KAT FELKNER:

Kat Felkner did not wish to introduce herself here.
Kat Felkner, 11803 Steen Pl., La Mirada, California, 90638.
The purpose of this compilation is to make available many of the ideas generated in the conception, initiation, and planning of Fall Quarter I in order to facilitate the eventual creation of Fall Quarter II, III, IV... Not that subsequent events will necessarily resemble the first. An experience in synergetic education and temporary community is as individually unique and unlimited as the persons involved. But many of these original thoughts were basic and generalizable, and, what's more important, they worked! So to free the energy of future planners for more intricate and subtle details, the ideas and facts are herein preserved, to be modified or disregarded as needed in the new situation.

The major statement ensconced in these pages, however, is simply that the metamorphosis of a favorite dream plan to reality is possible and can be the kind of totally engaging learning experience and challenge that makes life worth living. All it takes is you.
I guess this is where it all starts really, and I guess I, Clint, am the starter, too. This fact ends up being of no importance. The relationship between myself and this project is similar to that between a mother and her child. At first the baby is totally dependent on its mother and would quickly die if she did not do the right motherly things. But as the young one matures it becomes more and more independent of its parent, until soon it doesn't need mother's support at all and will go on living on its own accord. So it was with the group and me.

In order that you understand that there wasn't really much magic involved in formulating the philosophy and game plan under which I was operating, I'll go back a ways and start at the beginning.

Back in 1972-73 I was living in an old somewhat embarrassed house and attending Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, a small college town in central California. The house's past sophistication was sometimes visible thru the jungle of unkert shrubs and cracked walkways by which it was surrounded. Sitting on high priced land, it was rented to pay the property taxes, soon to be torn down and replaced by a restaurant and parking lot. This was my first off-campus living situation. Joining forces with three other male persons to form a "we", the four of us signed the rental agreement, planted a garden, repainted the house's interior, and waged upon the inherent freedom of it all hanging like a carrot before our noses. Boldly naming ourselves The Freeshold (Freeholders of the Flying Mantra from Starbrow's End) we set out to try something new.

Our house had three bedrooms. The plan was to all sleep in the same room using a silent light bulb wake-alarm system programmed from the hall. Dressing would be done in the Study, which was the largest bedroom, where each of us had his own corner to personalize with desks, posters, lamps, and bookshelves. The smallest room was hung with blankets and filled with mattresses, pillows, and overstuffed chairs. This was the Meditation Room. We were the Transcendental Meditation Center for the San Luis Obispo Students International Meditation Society. An archaic weapons rack filled one of our dining room walls.

Chores were divided, charted, and rotated. He who cooked dinner got to make up the rules by which we ate, so we learned to eat with chopsticks and went so far as to gather around a communal pot, naked before a blazing fire caveman style, eating with our fingers. Group classes in fencing, self-taught music, and foreign languages were planned. The atmosphere was open and spontaneous; anything goes was the rule. The concept was neat. And it worked——for two months.

Then things began to dis-integrate. There wasn't enuf privacy. Each of us in our new found freedom was beginning to explore the intricacies of relationships with female persons. Changes were made. Each of us was trying to live in the style of what he thought was the good life. The styles clashed. Maybe we had spread ourselves too thinly, taken on too big a project. Maybe while reveling in the freedom we didn't see need for the accompanying responsibility of clean, straightforward, communication with our own selves and between us. Or maybe we didn't know how. Maybe we didn't have enuf practice at group interaction or problem solving. It was all so new. Perhaps it was destined to crumble from the start. But even tho things got pretty nasty there for awhile, immeasurable amounts of learning took place. It was not meaningless. Two of the Freeholders married the women they grew to know in the tumult. I would live thru it all again for what I gained.

Because one of the things I gained was a sparkle of understanding, a whizp of an idea that what we had strived for in the Freehold could really exist. I knew it could work. All I had to do was think it out a lot more, brok what I had learned, and try again. So in the ashes of our Experiment, as the others moved out and were replaced by buffering strangers
I took a three month leave of absence from school, read books from a list of titles I'd gathered from respected friends, and wrote, trying to put together on paper all the related concepts and parameters that I thought would be relevant and useful in creating a viable Freehold-like community. I worked at it, but the problem was very complex. My quarter long sabbatical came to an end with no definitive results. I went back to school. My scribbles got stuffed into a manila envelope entitled "People Course: Human Workshop," and my ideas sunk to a subconscious level to fester for a year and a half.

It was Fall Quarter of the 1974-75 school year that I discovered the magic of the mind had been busily working at forming a network of all my learnings, and complete concepts began bubbling into consciousness. Certain aphorisms and quotes began to make a lot of sense to me:

"If you give them paper, consider writing the other way."
"Objection, evasion, joyous distrust, and love of irony are signs of health: everything absolute belongs to pathology." Nietzsche. (17: )

"You are limited only by what you believe."
"Live by the formula that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy." Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (25: 4 ). Form are rules; rules are untruths; the truth is there are no absolute rules by which to live.

"The serious problems of life are never fully solved. If ever they appear to be it is a sign that something has been lost. The meaning and purpose of a problem seems to lie not in its solution but in our working at it incessantly. This alone preserves us from stultification and petrification." C. G. Jung. (10: )

"Your mind is yours to play with and make into whatever you want." Clint Callahan III.

One maxim led to a philosophical statement of the human condition thru which I began to understand the why behind some of my various activities. It goes like this: THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE.

Present an animal with a change, a new situation, and it can respond with one of the four F's: flee, fish, feed, or the other one. Each species has developed its own specialized physical modifications to strengthen one or more of these four responses in order to increase its chances of survival in a new situation. They're specific adaptations: jaws that bite; claws that catch; wings, fins, armor plate, the ability to run sixty miles an hour, dig homes deep underground, eat worms, or an incredibly keen sense of smell or hearing, the specializations are inordinately clever and amazingly well developed. But thereafter these creatures are stuck, and only by using their specific adaption to its fullest capacity can these creatures survive.

Present a human being with a change and he is not limited to those four built-in responses. In fact he can tailor fit his response exactly to each new situation, as each one is at least a little bit different. The only outstanding physical adaptations humans have evolved are an opposing thumb on a grasping hand, and an oversized brain. These adaptations are not specific. They force humans to become generalists, to make generalizations. Only by practicing and using generalized skills to their fullest capacity can the human race survive.

That last is an interesting statement for two reasons. First, we don't know what a human being's fullest capacity is. Every maximum limit set as to what a human can achieve is surpassed, and it is still claimed that we use only ten percent of our minds. Is the remainder a vast creative subconscious waiting to be trained and controlled? Every once in awhile we get a hint of this massive subsurface iceberg of unexplored potential. Is it not a telltale sign when this thing called "intuition offers...instantaneously that which the intellect or reasoning mind of man could accomplish only after weeks or months of monumental trial and error?" J. Murphy. (36: ). Is it possible to tame one's hunches and dreams? Is what they call ESP just finely tuned intuiting, or in fact a
direct connection between a human’s mind and all things and non-things, past, present, and future throughout the universe? How do I comprehend the fact that I, and I believe every healthy person can sense any other human at a distance and detect and help repair any mental or physical abnormalities which might be ailing him? How do I explain the twelve year old girl who with her mind bent the spoon I handed her right before my eyes? And that no accepted theory in physics, medicine, psychology, or biology even hints that such events are possible let alone inherent to the human condition?

The second reason the above statement is interesting is, how do you practice making generalizations? If this is the skill by which humans must survive, how do you get better at it? This question seemed erasable and has been a motivating force behind many of my activities. Robert A. Heinlein says:

A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects. (9:248)

But besides having a generalized, multifunctional skillbank, I’ve discovered that success at being a generalist lies largely in the Art of Improvising. Faking it. So I spent time strengthening my ability to improvise.

"Thinking fast in an emergency depends on the habit of figuring things out in advance." The Boy Scout Handbook. (3:427) A fun way to practice faking it is to set up a hypothetical situation and think yourself thru it. Like this: It’s been approximately 10,000 years since the last ice age. About time for another. Quick figuring out what are all the things you would do if you woke up tomorrow morning to find yourself in the middle of the new ice age?

Another way to practice improvising is to set up some arbitrary limits to improvise within. My favorite practice situation is survival camping. We practiced improvising a lot during our Thursday Night Meetings (see the THURSDAY NIGHT MEETINGS #1, #2, #3 AND SO ON section). People seemed to benefit from this and have fun at the same time. And I saw that by improvising my way out of a couple real life nasty predicaments my self-confidence began to grow wide-ranging and sturdy. Observing such positive changes take place I began to wonder: What would it be like if instead of being taught things at school, we were taught how to learn for ourselves, how to ask direct, clear, relevant questions in a new situation, how to improvise a multitude of quick and "dirty" (not rule bound) alternative solutions, how to intuitively evaluate and act on the best one, and how to make generalizations from the results? These are all learnable skills!

But I digress.

To my amazement, while all these realizations rampaged thru my brain, the concept of a Freehold community rose again to consciousness, and as I looked at them they make sense! See, back there at the Freehold I think many of the ideas we implemented may have been too much mine alone and not group generated. And it didn’t work having it that way. A group supports that which it creates. In setting up a community it would not work if I planned out every detail and then advertised for people who wanted to fit into my plan. People won’t do that. So here was my new hypothesis. If I got the right group of people together in the right circumstances, and, if it were to work at all, they would generate from among themselves a project involving an extended environment fostering continuous exploration and growth. The details would take care of themselves. So simple! There
remained but two questions: What was the "right" kind of person and what was the "right" environment?

Ah, yes. Let's see now. The right person would have to be, oh, someone very open, interested in change, growth, and new experiences, able to ask meaningful, pertinent, direct questions, fairly together, uh, adventurous....Hmmm, this place is not overabundant in people of such description. That person would have to be different, abnormal, sort of a freak. Yes, that's it! A FREEK!

A freak is a free, unique, self-confident, self-directed, creative, aware, whole individual living within a self-made system of rules and values. Hesh can often be detected by his unpredictability, productive spontaneity, and positive enthusiasm generated by the pure delight and excitement of discovering, exploring, and learning what an adventure it is to be alive. Typically in Twentieth Century American Society a freak is seen as a freak. That's our person.

The environment? Well, as different from the familiar school environment as possible. Basically something that says it's very okay to be yourself, to ask questions, to try out new ideas and ways of being. A place to share learnings, supportive of many philosophies, something inspirational and active. It had to be comfortable yet ever changing and alive, never becoming institutionalized. The environment had to be very "YES!"

What we ended up doing is recorded more specifically in the following pages. But generally the plan was this. I reserved a room in the University Union and we held the Initial Meetings. I spoke what I was thinking, feeling, and hoping. Maybe too philosophically, maybe too radically, but I spoke, and we talked. We premiered "The Art of Adventure," a film I had just completed. And then came the first test of my hypothesis. Do you wish to continue meeting once a week or whatever in an environment such as this???

Yes!

So we met. And to give a strong start to the mood, attitude, and mind set I was trying to create, I directed the first three meetings. Then I shut up and waited. This was the second test of my hypothesis. Are you individually or in small groups brave and interested enough to risk embarrassment, to chance being asked questions you can't answer, and to take on the responsibility of calling a meeting to some kind of order? And at that meeting, by your own love, guide those interested towards awareness, growth, strength and control??

Yes!!

So they took over, and it worked. And after five months of astounding gatherings came the third test of my hypothesis. Are we interested and together enough as a group to assemble our own personal curricula and then generate a semi-permanent environment similar to what we've developed at our meetings where we can practice and learn what we really want to? YES!!!

The resulting experience was incredibly positive. However I just want to say here that if at any time there had been a NO! or a (silence), that is where this whole thing would have ended. And if you would have looked you would probably have seen me scratching my head, puzzling over one of those well known, well worn drawing boards, analyzing and planning my next attempt. To look back on it now and know that everything we did was guesswork, was nothing more than what felt right, I get another bit of feedback confirming the unlimited human potential theory, and I begin to believe that guessing is all that anybody ever does.
The first problem, then, was to make it known to all the local freeks that we were having a hoedown: The Introductory Meeting. More subtle and difficult than it at first seemed, we wanted to draw out of their niches and attract to a meeting that group of unique individuals who as a general rule didn’t like to attend group functions. Our announcements had to stand out as different, but not so bizarre or corny as to sound insincere. And we had a minimum amount of money to work with.

After a bit of looking around, it was discovered that if we were clever we could get dittos run off for free thru a departmental office at school, and that campus radio and newspaper space was available for the asking at no cost. Those would be our channels. At the time we were only four strong. Let’s go get ‘em.

The following pages are samples of posters we used. Clint wrote the words. Phyllis and Roger Tabor helped with the artwork and the footwork. We posted over 300 flyers on-campus and as many as we could squeeze on the bulletin boards at health food stores, co-ops, laundromats, used book stores, shopping centers, apartment complexes and all the other obscure interesting public places we could think of. We quickly discovered that the on-campus posters were torn down for lack of sponsorship by an Associated Students Incorporated recognized club or committee. By petitioning the Outings Committee we acquired their official support, but then found the ditto print faded to illegibility in bright sun.

Deborah L. Williams scribed the article for the Cal Poly "Mustang Daily." It was printed the day before it was supposed to be thereby giving the wrong date for the meeting. Clint wrote the text of the radio spot which nobody ever heard. And yet still, somehow, that Friday night, even with Murphy hard on our heels, about seventy five people risked showing their faces at our gathering.

RADIO SPOT 1-7-75

If you feel stifled by the unstated rules of our conventional college environment, if you are at all inclined to use your Saturday mornings for something more creative than sleeping off the night before, if you consider exploring and practicing generally undeveloped skills inherent to the human condition as worthy of your concentrated effort, then stop by UU Room 220 at 7:00 this Friday night. We are organizing an environment more conducive to your style of living. Come add your thoughts and energy to ours.
A challenge, an adventure, a learning experience. Living together in the bushes, sharing what you know and learning new things. Have you ever wanted to try something out?

This is a chance to realize your dreams, to experience the new, to experiment with yourself, to participate in creating an environment better suited to developing the person as a whole.

The whole human being has more uniqueness, control, self-confidence, creativity, vitality, responsibility, awareness, freedom, adaptability, and fewer habits, rules, and fears. But who ever deliberately practices these skills and attitudes?

You are invited to swap thoughts with us at our initial meeting Friday,
January 10, 1975 7:00 P.M.
University Union Room 220
ATTENTION

Part time Professional Heroes
Engineers of Philosophy
Archaic Weapons Masters
Strategists Adept
Creative Alchemists
True Artists
Musicians
and
Magicians
Explorers
Inventors
Jack of all trades
Espers

You are invited to participate in organizing an environment more conducive to learning and sharing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes fundamental to our respective pursuits.

FRI. Jan. 10 7:00 P.M.
INITIAL MEETING: University Union Room 320

ADVENTURERS
A group of us self-motivated students is going to meet once a week for the next two quarters. We will explore the ideas and attitudes that would allow about 15 of us / you to move into the bushes, set up camp, and teach each other things that we've wanted to learn but that are not dealt with well at school. Methods and goals will be limited only by your imagination which you are hereby invited to share with us:

Friday Jan 10, 1975 7:00 PM
University Union RM 220
THE INTRODUCTORY MEETING

Quarter of seven. Friday night and people have already begun trickling into Room 220 of the University Union. The room is fairly large, brick walled, carpeted. We have pushed all the chairs and tables off to the side in order to reduce the stage/audience effect. This is going to be real. I (Clint) had stayed awake all the previous night helping Deborah Williams assemble the sound track for my film "The Art of Adventure." This is good. I have never really spoken to a large group of people before and I am too tired to be nervous. The extra adrenalin circulating in my blood merely serves to keep me alert. All is set up and ready. Deborah, Phyllis, Roger and I sit on the floor as strangers and interact with the folks coming in now, striving to get a feeling for the types of people we have showing up before things get rolling. Ten after seven. Well, kid, this is it. I stand up with my handful of notes, walk to the center of the group, turn, smile, and begin.

[Ed the Editor's Note: In transcribing the original Bic-penned pages I faced enormous difficulties. First, Clint was apparently practicing his improvising by scribbling the lines with his left foot so he'd be prepared if both his arms should break someday. Besides being illegibly written, many of the words had smeared all over the wrinkled paper due to the excited wetness of his palms. However the hardest thing to cope with was that much of the text made no sense. I had no choice but to present them as an esoteric document -- to be marveled at but perhaps not fully comprehended.]

Hello.

My name is Clint Callahan.

It's good to see all of you here.

See, us students have had fifteen years training at sitting on hard wooden benches for hours at a time, at temporary memorization and taking tests, and at not rocking the boat. Most of us find a way, sometimes consciously, to wash the taste of a bad day of school out of our heads. I wasn't certain if there were others who had discovered this way.

Fifteen years training is a long time to practice something, which means these skills must be deeply imbedded in our heads. They are. I know that if I were to talk on for another ten minutes many of you, the interested, would begin to nod off to sleep. Just because your body would say I was lecturing and sleep is its response to lectures.

So tonight we're going to start off with a bang! (At this point Phyllis pops the balloons she's had hidden behind her back.)

To help get us all unstuck and loosened up (sounds like a laxative commercial...) a few of us have a couple activities we'd like to share with you. These are activities which have added new dimensions to our thinking and understanding -- even in their simplicity.

Roger Taber has manufactured a lot of parts and pieces, and if you want to, he can teach you how to start a fire by rubbing two sticks together. You won't believe it till you do it.

And Phyllis Goldman has set up a telescope in an interesting place, Jupiter is directly overhead, and you should be able to see four of her moons. That is provided Phyllis' anti-rain dance works.

As with anything, the more you get into it, the more you get out of it. Try not to inhibit your participation with your pride. See you back here in about forty-five minutes,
This second part of the meeting was going to be a little hairy. In order not to lose touch with the group, I tried to involve them as much as possible in uncovering the sequence of thoughts I intended to present. The group bellied and took to empathetic interaction very well, in fact so well that at one point many people simultaneously felt the discomfort of a few of those present. We were getting too metaphysical and intangible, and several in the group were not enjoying it. In response to this awareness we changed the tempo of the meeting and proceeded from there.

So as folks returned from the activities I asked:

Well, how was it? Any comments?

What happened?

How many Inventors are here tonight? Archaic Weaponsmasters? Engineers of Philosophy? ESPers? Do you see in whose company you sit?

Human beings are built such that they must stand alone. There is no connection, no such thing as a collective human being, a collective brain or heart. Human beings in many respects appear to be singularities.

I wondered how this apparent aloneness was dealt with by healthy productive, happy people? In my search for answers I found that a man named Abraham Maslow had spent much time studying healthiness instead of sickness, wholeness and balance instead of neurosis and psychosis. One description he made of healthy human beings characterizes them as: "self-confident, socially poised, relaxed, introverted, have high self-esteem, are self-assured, have a feeling of general capability, are unconventional, have less respect for rules, have a tendency to use people [they have the honesty, respect, and will to ask people's involvement], have freer personality expression, are somewhat more secure, have an autonomous code of ethics, are more independent, less religious, more masculine, less polite, and have a love of adventure, novelty, and new experience." (23:205)

Now this is okay for locating healthy people in the field, but it's a description from the outside. What I really wanted to know is what's going on in this healthy person's head? What does hesh believe in? How does hesh think about and approach situations? How does hesh deal with the world?

So I looked further and here's what I came up with. Most of you are probably already aware of these.

First hesh believes in himself. Hesh has walked around inside his head and had enuf experiences to be comfortable with the realization that there are no fundamental rules by which to live. In this vacuum hesh sees that it's okay to make up his own rules, so creates and lives by those (foma are rules, or lies) which help to make hem brave and kind and healthy and happy. Hesh decides that hesh won't ever know the whole story and can't spend his life waiting around being afraid of acting on not enuf information. Hesh is willing to risk getting embarrassed, hurt or even punished in order to live more fully and to learn and grow. Hesh doesn't like to react unconsciously, to live by habit, but prefers to stay as alive and awake and in control of his attention as possible, dealing with each situation afresh as it arises. Because of this, hesh's actions are not very regular or predictable and this can be scary to normal folks. Hesh is aware of that too, striving not to manifest too much chaos or ill-will.

The purpose of this meeting then is that we have a proposition to make to you. Namely that we synergize our energies and create for ourselves an environment that will foster the growth and development of us as whole persons. To see if perhaps we can begin to neutralize fifteen years of practiced normality.

It was at this point that we showed the film made from the following script.
THE ART OF ADVENTURE

********--------------

(shooting script)  Clint Callahan III
January 1974

Title

fade to: Black screen. Three or four beats of some heavy acid rock music burst forth, and on the beat of the main theme

cut to: A bright close-up of a totally involved drummer

zoom out: To include the rest of the band playing at an outdoor TGIF beer party on a sunny Friday afternoon.

zoom out: Further and pan over the rather well attended "function", taking note of a number of the most common activities of college students interacting at such a gathering. The voices, shrieks, and rowdy laughter of the crowd mix with the blaring music.

cut to: Several faces and several people of the mob, heads in the same direction.

cut to: Unfocused close-up of yellow foamy liquid pouring out of a beer keg tap into someone's favorite clear glass beer mug. Image focuses and we follow the glass to the mouth of its owner and watch one third of its contents surge into the thirsting cavity.

cut to: Camera begins picking out different people, catching the uninhibited them, the alcohol loosened them, and the wild somewhat raw excitement that is the mood of the place. We see a girl getting soozed. Expressions on people's faces and their alcohol exaggerated mannerisms portray the motivations for being a part of such a gathering. The bawdiness, the plastic smiles, the not-happy happiness. The beer is obvious. The marijuana is assumed. During these people close-ups we keep coming back to one guy. Sparingly at first, then with greater repetition. Dark hair, angled face, his eyes drinking in the same view of the party as the camera and he’s a little disgusted that his image of what these parties could be is not very close to what they turn out to be. His name is Kreas, and he is alone. A beer is held loosely in one hand but we never see him drink. He keeps moving around, watching, but obviously not very "into" the what's happening.

cut to: The screen starts making more rapid scene changes, more "excitement." More beer, more loudly laughing faces, building, building more, till there's a whole glass of beer thrown in somebody's face - hold there a second to catch the reaction of surprise then anger. Then the fight starts.

cut to: Beer-in-the-face grabs the other guy's shirt and goes for a full slow motion swing at the fellow's jaw, shirt rips, guy staggers back.

cut to: Flashes of the crowd, the bloodthirsty, excitement hunting, fight cheering look in their eye as they gather 'round for a little "fun."

cut to: Glimpses of our dark haired observer trying to see what's going on. He sees and it's the last straw. He's totally disgusted.

cut to: Flashes of the fight - close-ups. Opponents are making a lot of wild movements and noise but neither of them is getting badly hurt. They're too buzzed.

dissolve: To Kreas who glares, then turns his back on the camera and crowd, sets down his beer, puts his hands in his pockets and walks unseen and disappointed away from everyone else.

zoom out: Watching Kreas leave the crowd, still alone. First the acid rock fades out leaving just the obnoxious crowd noises, which then
Kras has decided to go for a walk thru town. There is some slow string music (prelude and first part of Neil Diamond's "Crunchy Granola Suite" from "Hot August Night" album) which fades in.

We see Kras on his way, head kind of down, pensive, kicks a can. View from above. Kras walks directly under camera then past a parked car sporting a bright bumper sticker.

Close-up of bumper sticker which reads: "IS THAT ALL THERE IS?"

Kras is sitting on a rock by a stream, an old grey mare offers him his condolences. He tenderly pats her nose, as if she perhaps were the only being in the world who understood him.

Kras walking by an anise bush, stopping to pluck a sprig and inhale its pungent sweet odor, then continuing.

A long shot of Kras walking around a corner, then rising to look over his shoulder.

Quickly to see a fellow standing on the corner up ahead, leaning against a street sign post. The sign says the street's name is "GLORY ROAD."

Derek leaning on pole. Derek is tall, thin, strangely blonde-ish hair with a bit of a beard. Two things stand out about him - the amazing sparkle of intelligence and understanding in his eyes, and the silk screened shirt he wears that brightly declares, "LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE." We see that he notices Kras coming, grasps his attitude, his mood, thinks, checks his watch, then slances up the street around the corner we can't see, and back to Kras. Derek hasn't moved but we see he's decided to do something.

Three-quarter shot from over Derek's shoulder at approaching Kras: their eyes meet. Kras sort of smiles, not really wanting to see anybody, especially someone he only slightly knows, and figures Derek is just like everybody else, like the people at the party. But Derek is very sincere and seems intent on blending into Kras's spirit, being absorbed into his thoughtful mood. Kras sees the honesty and falls for it, appreciating the attention and concern; he doesn't walk on. Derek is glad Kras stayed, looks at his watch and slances up the street, smiles.

Three girls and a guy nearly bounce around the corner, obviously coming to meet Derek. One of the girls has a brown paper shopping bag carefully tucked under her arm. These similarly college aged newcomers are individually dressed in a practical way, prepared for whatever might come up, all bright and happy, eager, unafraid.

Dolly shot from the street. Derek keeps talking with Kras as girls and guy arrive. He smiles, greets them happily and somewhat conspiratorially, but keeps Kras in the conversation. The others accept this kind of knowingly and with Kras, Derek, and a girl in the lead, the rest close behind they take off across the street. Kras is a little amazed and very interested in the apparent attitudes of his escort, and it shows. As group starts across street, do does the camera staying parallel with them, catching their lively faces and conversation, and also Kras' frequent intense glances at the others. Group salavants across glass store front and camera stops while group walks out of picture.

Tilt large brightly lettered sign in store window fills the screen: "INCREASED AWARENESS ALLOWS YOU TO SEE MORE THAN WHAT IS JUST VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE."

To front view of Derek's very aware face, eyes darting here and there, not missing a thing, as he's walking down street.

A view of the street ahead to give us a chance to see if we can
see more than what's there. Across another street on the corner are parked cars in a parking lot, and an old man with a cane and hat hobbling directly towards the camera.

**cut to:** Close ups of some of the group's farsighted, glowing, faces as they peer anxiously up the street, and Kras as he watches them, thinking.

**cut to:** View from behind the group as they cross the street ahead. The old man is struggling along setting near to where the group is apparently headed. One of the girls reaches the far corner first and grabs a yellow "CAUTION" sign from the sidewalk, placing it in the street next to the curb. As she does that, Derek and another girl deftly remove a storm drain grating and the group begins to disappear into the hole in the pavement one at a time until only a very startled Kras is left standing alone and wondering what exactly he should do. Glancing nervously around, he suddenly starts laughing and follows the group down the obliette. All this happens very quickly and efficiently and the old man is right there the whole time. When no one else remains above around the old man kind of stops and takes a little look around, as if by some chance he might have missed something, but decides he didn't and continues his trek.

**cut to:** A stark black grill against a bright blue sky. It's apparent that we're looking out of the drainage sewer that the group entered. Camera pans down to pitch blackness for a second, then a flash of light and a match is struck. We see it eerily held by a hand which floats into a jar to light a candle there.

**cut to:** The sewer. Single file on all fours or kind of stoop walking, the group passes. First and fourth crawlers hold candle-in-jar lanterns. Girl is first, Kras fourth, Derek last. As Derek passes a candle lit scene where each person in group is precariously balanced alone a ledge with water rushing below. Can't really see too well what's happening, but it looks exciting. Kras slips a little but is caught by the firm grips of persons on his either side.

**cut to:** unfocused black wiggles on stark bright light. A light, whistly tune is now playing as the figures dance along. Scene focuses to see silhouettes under the city in a water filled tunnel; the group is splashing merrily along four or five abreast as they exit into daylight and are quite elated about the success of their adventure.

**cut to:** Especially Kras. Close-up of his exclaiming face as he and others climb up bank of stream and

**cut to:** Get on sidewalk. All have wet pants past their knees. Group walks around corner and still talking excitedly

**cut to:** Enters a little cafe to talk things over and get a snack. Shot from inside we see them sit at a window table. Kras between two of the girls. As they arrange themselves, Derek catches the eye of a young waitress and does a little smile-wink-nod signal towards Kras. The waitress smiles and winks back. She understands.

**cut to:** The waitress passing out menus, then leaving.

**cut to:** Over Kras's shoulder we watch as he opens his menu and stares at the note inside: "THERE ARE NO UNIVERSALLY TRUE RULES BY WHICH TO LIVE."

**cut to:** The whole table. As Kras lifts his eyes from the menu he grins a little, not exactly sure what to think. He peers first at Derek, then the others, trying to grasp at all their implications.

**cut to:** Their glances being interrupted by the waitress bringing food.
Accordingly she knows their preferences. They all get assorted glasses of fruit juice except for Kras, who sets this plate of just awful looking slimy stuff.

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zoom in:
So whole screen is filled with the mess, most notably what look
like rows of tiny suction cups. They're boiled squid.
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cut to:
Kras's staring, very repulsed face.

cut to:
The whole table of people scrunnling ear to ear, or outright
laughing. Then one of the girls next to Kras takes one of the
brown wiggly lumps in her fingers, dips it into a sauce, and
pops it into her mouth with seeming relish. Kras, with much
deliberation and everyone expectantly watching, swallows hard
once and proceeds to follow suit. After a few cautious chews he
finds that all his fears were falsely grounded and even manages
a smile. Everyone at the table starts laughing again as they
pounce upon and devour the oceanic delicacy.

dissolve:
The group has left the restaurant and is now walking down the
street again. Kras flanked by the same two girls. All of a sud-
den they each grab an arm and merrily guide him into what ap-
pears to be a book store. Camera stops at the door to look at a
poster: "YOU ARE LIMITED ONLY BY WHAT YOU BELIEVE."

cut to:
It is a book store. The girls plant Derek near the cash regis-
ter counter and he kind of looks after them as they all dance off
among the isles and shelves, picking out a copy of their favorite
books, skip back, and neatly, challenging, line them up along
the counter top in front of Kras. The lady at the register won-
ders what the younger generation will get into next.

cut to:
A slow pan of the titles: "Stranger in a Strange Land," "Dune,"
of loving," "Ecotopia," and "Teaching as a Subversive Activity"
are among them. Pan ends at a serious but willing Kras's face,
sizing things up, looking at the books. Then he does a thing
that isn't too common on film. He slowly, gently, looks
straight at the camera, first with his eyes, then with his
whole face full on. He smiles just a little, eyes sparkling,
accepts the challenge, then looks at the shopkeeper nodding his
willingness to purchase the books. The lady sees and begins
ringing up the sale. Kras picks up one of the paperbacks and we

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zoom in:
zoom out:
To a close-up of one of the pages.
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cut to:
From pages of perhaps the same book, but now we see Kras sitting
at his desk. He's been reading for quite a while. He looks up,
takes a deep breath, flips the book over and rubs his tired
eyes. A shot comes to him and he stares out the window for a
second, then smiles to himself. Pulling a sheet of paper from
his desk, he begins writing with a black felt tipped pen:
"HI DEREK,....."

cut to:
The outside of a class room as class ends. Derek and others ex-
it the room into bright sunshine carrying books. Derek stretch-
es and breathes deeply, appreciating the fact that class is fin-
ally over, and is surprised when a confident, good looking fe-
male stranger approaches him, hands him a coke in a paper cup,
and nods for him to drink it, then just as quickly disappears
back into the crowd. Derek considers this a moment, carefully
examining the drink, then starts sipping it while mulling over
the event in his mind. Til he notices something in the bottom
of his glass. Pouring the drink into the bushes he proceeds to
pull out a plastic wrapped packet which when unwrapped becomes a
note reading:
HI DEREK,
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING NEAT THIS WEEKEND. GOT ANY IDEAS?
WE'RE WAITING TO TALK WITH YOU ON THE LIBRARY LAWN. HURRY UP!
- KRAG
P.S. HER NAME IS ANGELA.

cut to: Close-up of note: A close-up of Derek's face as he looks up off into the distance, grinning, and turns to go. Derek had no intentions with Krags when they met on the corner except to expose him to that sewer experience that once. However, if Krags was ripe for it, that might just have been enuf to get the guy going in a freer direction all by himself. Derek realizes that Krags was ripe for it and that's why he grins.
dissolve: Into the face of a huge black locomotive charging almost directly into us. Just before total cataclysm occurs we cut to: A view of the backs of people sitting on top of a train car going sixty miles an hour along a straightaway, sunny blue sky, everyone's hair and clothes flapping in the warm wind. You just know they're having the time of their lives. These scenes are accompanied by some expertly executed quietly energetic train hopping music (Leo Kottke's "Cripple Creek").
cut to: Their smiling faces as they experience the thrill of mooching a ride on the back of one of those monstrous machines. We see Krags, Derek, and Angela are among those in front. Another guy and two more girls make up the crew this time. We might recognize a couple of them from the sewer expedition.
cut to: A profile of Derek's head, which he turns away from us to scan the horizon. The sun plays thru his hair.
cut to: Where Derek was looking. It's a dizzying, daring shot from the side of the train around a bend in the tracks. We can see the engines way up ahead, the wheels spinning, ground whizzing by. The terrain is becoming hillier.
cut to: Angela carefully crawling up next to Krags to say something to him and point forward. Both of their smiles dissolve into a slightly worried look, neither of them knowing exactly what to do, where to go. Krags finally signals to get down and flatten out against the floor of the train car. Immediately we cut to: A view from their backs and we see what they're nervous about. Without a thought, the yawning black mouth of a tunnel is swallowing the entire forward section of the train, and they're next! In they go. Then it's blackness. Then just as suddenly they're out again, unscathed. It gives them some confidence. All the bodies lift up their heads and turn back smiling to see what they just lived thru.
cut to: View of backs of train riders all sitting up ready to fully experience this next tunnel coming up. As we plunge into darkness the camera whirs directly overhead till it's upside down watching the train cars behind enter the tunnel.
cut to: Right side up view of group's backs as they approach tunnel exit. As exit zooms past the camera again flips over backwards affording us an upside down view of train leaving the tube. Then camera slowly rotates til picture is rightside up.
cut to: A breathtaking view from the train nearing the top of the pass. We can see rolling green hills, maybe some grazing bovine, mountains off in the distance, the sun beginning to settle behind them.
cut to: The last train scene, a close-up of the setting sun glowing on the smile of Krags's face as he soaks up the view we just saw.
Black. The last notes of the train music drift off into the
ether and are replaced by the sound of wind blowing. Not a
storm, but a wind that sounds like it's been blowing for all of
eternity and will continue for the rest of time.

Seemingly a still picture. Kras is perched cross legged on a
boulder, chin on his fists. It's almost as if he were floating
amongst the huge billowy grey and white and golden thunderhead
clouds filling the evening sky. Kras is wearing different
clothes so we know some time has passed. A slight breeze ruff-
bles his hair as he stares off into the past and future, thinking
about the present. Now, Kras is no philosopher, but he's been
reading those books lately and he's had some really fine experi-
ences with the kind of people he never knew existed. True,
he'd met honest people before, friendly, open, nice people, but
Derek and sans were something more. They had a spark of vital-
ity in them which other people seemed to be missing. They were
a little bit more alive, looking for new things to learn and try
out, always ready for an adventure. And if they couldn't find
one, they could create one. They had power, tho you might not
guess it unless you saw them in action in their own environment.
They seemed to be able to unselfishly empathize with other peo-
ple and situations, they could grasp what was going on and find
rappor with it, or not if they chose. They weren't trapped by
themselves or others but were pretty much free, and knew it,
loved it, and were responsible for it. And they were happy.

And Kras was happy. He knew his happiness was somehow de-
vised from befriending these people. He could see their simple
ideals, and he took them for himself, and he found that this
little idealism was all the water necessary to start him sprout-
and blooming and growing to fulfill his potentials, to come a-
live.

Now Kras doesn't think all this, but deep inside his cells
know it and realize it. And to show this on film we see a num-er of analogy sequences. Between each segment is a few seconds
of film showing Kras still sitting on the rock. The flashes
consist of:

1) A time lapse of a large purple and white passion flower
opening from a bud to its full magnificence.
2) A little baby chicken stretching its down covered stub-
by wings in the sun.
3) A new born calf struggling to a standing position and
wobbly succeeding for perhaps the first time.

The last switch back to Kras holds there while the wind
sound dies off to silence. Slowly, Kras lifts his head and eas-
es himself into a standing position, takes a deep breath,
stretches a little, really appreciating the fresh clean air and
being alive to breathe it. He has no great realizations, no
sudden insights, just a smile and a hop off the rock as he be-
gins ambling back down the hill. The simplicity yet strength of
the situation is accompanied by a springy little guitar solo
(Leo Kottke's "Stealing") that quietly takes control on his walk
down the hill. We'll try to have a rainbow arching across the
sky now but you can't have everything.

Black. Then, as the fuller strains of the music begin, the pic-
ture very, very slowly, almost imperceptibly, begins to
cut to:

Til we can finally see a telephoto picture of three bronze col-
ored figures striding down a dirt road. As they come nearer we
can tell the golden color is from the setting sun, and we see
that they are two guys and a girl each wearing a backpack. The
guys are Kras and Derek; the girl is Angela. She walks between
them. As they walk by the camera we
dissolve: to a telephoto shot of a fabulous orange sunset, then
dissolve: to a silhouette view of the hikers' backs as they reach the top
of a little hill and stop for a moment. At this point the suit-
ar music has ended and a peaceful, gentle flute duet takes over.
The trio are seen as black against the orange sky, standing next
to a tree. Angela reaches out to her side and takes a hand of
each of the men standing beside her. She looks at Krag, and
slowly leans over and kisses him on the lips, then looks at
Derek and takes her time giving him a kiss too. Hands joined
they walk off down the road into the sunset and their own new
adventure.
fade to: Black.
cut to: Credits. Then sound fades.

- THE END -

People actually applauded as the screen went dark, and that was the
end of the planned meeting. It was getting late, yet everyone was still
pretty excited and not quite ready to leave it at that. There was some
fumbling about. The question was finally asked if anyone was interested
in getting together again. A large affirmative response allowed us to di-
vulge that we'd a fifty-cent-spaghetti-dinner meeting planned but were
unsure whether the apartment was large enuf to hold all those who might
show up. Chuck Leix volunteered the use of his house complete with fire-
place, so we set up a time, wrote the address on the chalk board for every-
one to copy, and set out a sign-up sheet to help us estimate approximate-
ly how much eats to prepare. All were warned to be sure to wear clothes
which they were willing to get dirty.

And about then everyone began to dribble out of the room, back to
their regularly scheduled lives, including us. It was with an exhausted,
contented, smiling sigh that we turned out the lights and headed out into
the quiet night.
THURSDAY NIGHT MEETINGS #1, #2, #3, AND SO ON.....
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The goal of these weekly meetings was to facilitate the attempts of participants to loosen their self-imposed choke collars, to positively reinforce their individual styles by supplying repetitive occasions on which they could be expressed in joyous accompaniment and without fear of being judged or outcast, or having to defend against ridicule or attack. The meetings were intended to allow those involved to discover that there do indeed exist others with creative, revolutionary, and individual ideas and values.

This was our chance to speak out. We wanted to communicate our feelings of excitement about exploring and creating adventures in what most people seemed to think was a same-old-thing-everyday-nothing-new-under-the-sun kind of world. To share our happy attitude of unlimited discovery. We wanted to dispel the tendencies of conventional organizations and free ourselves from traditional societal patterns. We wanted to promote an atmosphere of unconditional interaction.

In general the meetings were to give the group members time, space, and a nudge towards growing more complete, whole, and in control, so that when we moved out into the bushes (if we moved out into the bushes...) they'd know what they wanted to do with themselves and would not be afraid of doing it. The first three meetings were structured and guided by Clint.

MEETING #1: HABITS AND RULES
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We met in Chuck Leix's house. The evening's menu was peanut butter spaghetti sauce over pasta, a coleslaw made of chopped raw broccoli and cauliflower, and peanut pie for dessert. The fun part was the rules. You can't use utensils to eat with, and you can't feed yourself. Needless to say this is quite a shaker of customary eating habits and it certainly gets people laughing and introduced to each other. Have you ever tried eating long slimy spaghetti noodles out of someone else's fingers in a jostling crowd?

After we cleaned up a bit, I (Clint) brought out two three-ring notebook binders labeled "IDEALOG: THEORETICAL and PRACTICAL." My suggestion was that we use these notebooks as a record of awarenesses and new ideas, and a reference for techniques and methods of learning and new experience. We could include lists of our favorite and recommended books and movies, favorite or applicable aphorisms, quotes, excerpts, and articles. Anything which might help broaden our horizons or enlarge our arsenal of possibilities. Anything that would help us develop a wider basis for understanding and dealing with the universe. The notebooks would be kept in as public a place as possible, open to anyone's use at any time.

We then entered a discussion based on the following questions. What are some rules that you know of? What are some of the rules you live by? Where did these rules come from? Are any of these rules absolute? Do you know of any absolute truths? What are some of the customs that you know of? Where do customs come from? What is a tradition? What are some of the traditions that you know of? What is a moral? What is a value? What is an attitude? What are some of the attitudes that you use? What are some of your fears? Are fears attitudes? What is a habit? Are fears habits? Are habits good? Are rules, or customs, or traditions, values,
morals, attitudes, or fears habits? How do you feel about the idea that
the only constant is change? And that habits are the antitheses of, or at
least often preclude the possibility of change? Is change good? How do
you change a habit?

I shared the idea that there are at least two ways of changing hab-
its. There is the brute force way; each time you find yourself acting or
thinking in the manner you are trying to avoid you begin to yell at your-
self, call yourself names, curse and get angry with yourself, and prob-
ably end up rationalizing why you can go ahead and do it anyway just this one
more time. This is the most common approach to habit changing. It almost
guarantees headaches and ulcers, being displeased with yourself, being
difficult to be around, and acts as a huge energy drain on your whole sys-
tem. Ursula K. Lesuin (14: ) claims the reason this method of changing
habits is not very successful is that to oppose something is to maintain it. Something like doing isometric exercises.

An alternate method is the watching way of changing habits. After
you've decided and isolated exactly what it is you desire to change you'll
find that there is a certain time lag between the time your body/mind be-
gins this habitual activity and the time you realize that this is the ac-
tivity you wanted to change. As soon as you remember, don't jump on your-
self. Merely stand back from yourself a ways and watch what you're doing.
Note every detail and try to observe everything you're doing as if you
were another person. Become familiar with the patterns of behavior in
your head; watch how you present yourself to yourself and the world out-
side. As you keep catching yourself and then observing your activity, you
will see that the time lag between beginning a habit and recognizing it as
such will begin to shorten until you are recognizing it the instant you
begin, and, finally, the instant before you begin. And once you have done
that you are in charge of the activity instead of it being in charge of
you. It is no longer a habit; it is a choice.

After the discussion we suggested people start thinking up the de-
tails of a meeting if they felt they wanted to do one, and a date on which
they would like to hold it. We figured out that because of people's sche-
dules, had we held the initial meeting on any other night of the week we
would have ended up with a completely different crowd of people. We'd
stick with Thursday Night Meetings.

Sipping mugs of hot mulled wine around a crackling fire was a pleas-
ant finale for our get-together.

MEETING #2: CREATIVITY
Thursday, 1/23/75

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Paul West began the meeting, again at Chuck Leix's, by sharing the
feelings he had about his desire to interact with the people in our group.
His thoughts are well expressed in these lines by Robert Francis, (6:134)

SUMMONS
Keep me from going to sleep too soon
Or if I go to sleep too soon
Come wake me up. Come any hour
Of night. Come whistling up the road.
Stomp on the porch. Bang on the door.
Make me get out of bed and come
And let you in and light a light.
Tell me the northern lights are on
And make me look. Or tell me clouds
Are doing something to the moon
They never did before, and show me.
See that I see. Talk to me till
I'm half as wide awake as you
And start to dress wondering why
I ever went to bed at all.
Tell me the walkins is superb.
Not only tell me but persuade me.
You know I'm not too hard persuaded.

To get things rolling we all sat in a circle with the idea of memorizing the first and last name of all eighteen present in about ten minutes. One person begins by stating his own name. The next person says his name and repeats the first person's. Each successive person proceeds in the same manner to restate the names of all those before him in the circle until the person who began the same gets to name everyone. Then changing positions and going around again assures that the names will last. This is an exercise in the principle of repetition as an aid to memorization.

Next we passed out pencils and papers and had people answer the following twenty-one questions which were read aloud in rapid succession. The desired answers are listed below. There were not a few groans when the official answers were read out. How well do you do?

TWENTY-ONE QUESTION CREATIVE MIND TEST

1) Do they have a fourth of July in England?
2) Why can't a man living in Winston-Salem, North Carolina be buried west of the Mississippi?
3) How many birthdays does the average woman have?
4) If you only had one match and entered a cold, dark room that had a kerosene lantern, wood burning stove, gas lamp, and an oil burner, which would you light first?
5) Some months have thirty days, some have thirty-one, how many have twenty-eight?
6) If you had three pills and were ordered to take one every half-hour, how long before they would be all gone?
7) How far can a North American white tailed deer run into the woods?
8) What are the four words on every U. S. minted coin?
9) How many baseball players are in the field during an inning?
10) Two U. S. coins add up to fifty-five cents, and one is not a nickel. What are they?
11) Is it legal in Nevada for a man to marry his widow's sister?
12) A farmer had seventeen sheep and all but nine died. How many were left?
13) Divide thirty by halves and add ten; what do you get?
14) Two men played seven games of checkers and they each won five games. How do you figure?
15) Take two apples from three apples and what do you have?
16) An archeologist digs up two Roman coins dated 46 B. C. Are they of any special value?
17) A woman gives a beggar fifty cents. The woman is the beggar's sister but the beggar is not the woman's brother. How?
18) How many animals of each species did Moses take aboard the Ark with him?
19) If a barber shaves all those in town who don't shave themselves, who shaves the barber?
20) What is the difference between a duck?
21) What is the sound of one hand clapping?
ANSWERS: 1) Of course they have a fourth of July in England. 2) He’s not dead yet. 3) One birthday. 4) You’d light the match first. 5) All the months have twenty-eight days. 6) One hour until the pills would be gone. 7) A deer can only run half-way into the woods. 8) IN GOD WE TRUST. 9) There are eighteen players in an inning of baseball. 10) A nickel and a fifty-cent piece. The other one is a nickel. 11) The man must be dead to have a widow. 12) Nine sheep are left. 13) Seventy. 14) They’re not playing each other. 15) Two apples. 16) No special value, the coins are counterfeit. 17) The beggar is a woman. 18) Moses didn’t go on the Ark. 19) No one. She doesn’t need to shave. 20) One of his legs is the same. 21) .

There are two highly useful skills with which I wanted the group to become familiar and eventually proficient in using. The first is consensus decision making and the second is brainstorming.

Consensus decision making is a set of discussion guidelines which allows the best ideas and understandings of the individuals within a group to sift out and become available for use by the whole group. Consensus usually takes longer than other methods of group decision making such as voting, or following the whim of the captain or a benevolent dictator, however it more fully utilizes the resources of the group and in addition, usually causes the group to feel better about and therefore more supportive of the results. Very often a consensus decision is a better quality decision than that which could be made by any single member of the group. And that’s a pretty heavy statement. It is best backed up by personal first-hand experience and for this we use "Psychology Today’s" Lost on the Moon test. (8:82)

I gave each person a Lost on the Moon test sheet and requested that they do the test individually, without knowing each other’s answers. Next we passed out the Consensus Decision Making instructions and after everyone had read them we talked it over to make sure all fully understood the intention of the process. Breaking up into groups of from four to seven people we again did the test, only this time shared our personal answers and attempted to reach a consensus within each group on every choice.

When all were done I read off NASA’s ranking and the reasoning they used (included at the end of this section). After scoring (see scoring instructions) we discovered only a couple people had better scores than their group. If you try the test you’ll find this is usually the case. Consensus decision making appeared to be a tool we could put to good use.
LOST ON THE MOON -- A TEST

Your spaceship has just crash-landed on the moon. You were scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship 200 miles away on the lighted surface of the moon, but the rough landing has ruined your ship and all equipment on board, except for the 15 items listed below. Your crew's survival depends on reaching the mother ship, so you must choose the most critical items available for the 200 mile trip. Your task is to rank these 15 items in terms of their importance for survival. Place number 1 by the most important item, number 2 by the second most important, and so on thru number 15, the least important. NASA experts have determined the best solution to this task. Their answers and reasoning will be given to you upon completion of the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>* ITEMS</th>
<th>NASA's REASONING</th>
<th>NASA's RANKS</th>
<th>YOUR! RANKS</th>
<th>ERROR! GROUP! ERROR*</th>
<th>GROUP* POINTS</th>
<th>YOUR! POINTS</th>
<th>TOTAL!</th>
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<td>* BOX OF MATCHES</td>
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<td>* TWO 100 POUND TANKS OF OXYGEN</td>
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<td>* SELF-INFLATING LIFE * RAFT</td>
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<td>* MAGNETIC COMPASS</td>
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<td>* 5 GALLONS OF WATER</td>
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<td>* SIGNAL FLARES</td>
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<td>* SOLAR POWERED FM * TRANSCIEVER</td>
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# YOUR! GROUP! TOTAL! #
Consensus is a decision process for making full use of available resources and for resolving conflicts creatively. Consensus is difficult to reach, so not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval. Complete unanimity is not the goal -- it is rarely achieved. But each individual should be able to accept the group rankings on the basis of logic and feasibility. When all group members feel this way, you have reached consensus as defined here, and the judgement may be entered as a group decision. Here are some guidelines to use in achieving consensus:

1) Avoid arguing for your own rankings. Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to the other member's reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.

2) Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next-most-acceptable alternative for all parties.

3) Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.

4) Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averages, coin-flips, and bargaining. When a dissenting member finally agrees don't feel that hush must be rewarded by having his own way on some later point.

5) Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions.

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS: Find the numerical difference between NASA's RANK and YOUR RANK for each item (subtract the smaller of the two numbers from the larger one) and write these in the YOUR ERROR POINTS column. Add all YOUR ERROR POINTS together and write the result in the YOUR TOTAL space below the column. This is your personal score, the lower the score the better. Now find the GROUP ERROR POINTS for each item by subtracting the smaller of NASA's RANK or GROUP RANK from the other, just as you did above. Tally the GROUP ERROR POINTS and enter the result in the GROUP TOTAL box. Compare YOUR TOTAL to GROUP TOTAL and see which is lower. The lower TOTAL is from the method which save the highest quality decision in this test.

Relaxing a little after being almost hopelessly lost on the moon, we watched "WHY NOT?" another film I'd made, and then took a break. During the recess there were three puzzle problems people could work on if they wanted. The first was the water glass problem. There are five water glasses lined up on the counter. The three on the left are filled with water. By moving only one glass, change the lineup to full, empty, full, empty, full.

The second puzzle was the Maier Two-Cord Problem. Two pieces of thin rope are hung from a high ceiling just far enough apart from each other that if you were to hold onto one and walk over towards the other you can't quite reach it. A number of objects are lying around: a broom, a chair, a pair of pliers, a belt. The challenge is to find as many different ways as you can to tie the ends of the cords together in a minimum amount of time.

The third mind twister was the Flexagon. A cardboard construct is made of a cube, top and bottom missing, sides cut on both diagonals and the whole thing is held together by flexible tape with the effect that all the joints are hinged. By dexterously manipulating the Flexagon thru
the correct series of geometric transformations it is possible to turn it inside out. No forcing or bending of cardboard is allowed.

The story goes that a mathematician in Chicago was once carelessly flipping his flexagon thru some novel modes and accidentally got his necktie entangled. With no amount of maneuvering could he pry himself loose; in fact each successive fold pulled him further and further into the angles and spaces. An office neighbor rushed in to find what all the commotion was, only to watch the last of the helpless man’s shoe disappear. Much conjecture went on as to exactly where the mathematician had disappeared but no conclusions could be made. However, some months later in Los Angeles, a college student found herself folding her flexagon thru a pattern she had never seen before and while struggling with one move the scuffed toe of a shoe popped out. Further folding produced the entire, somewhat confused and bedraggled Chicago mathematician who was then severely punished for being found in a woman’s dorm after hours. I think there’s a moral here somewhere, just haven’t put my finger on it yet.

Back to the meeting.

The second skill I wanted to share with the group was brainstorming. The thought here is that there is more than one solution to any problem, so the more solution ideas you have to work with, the more perfect a solution you’ll be able to choose and use. Brainstorming’s utility is derived from the fact that it is an idea generating tool. Ten ideas per minute is the usual rate, which in just five minutes is fifty ideas! Once you have gathered a group of three to twelve people and someone has volunteered to write down EVERY idea, the rules are quite simple.

RULES FOR BRAINSTORMING

1) Phrase your problem question in an open ended, unlimiting manner, such as: What are all the ways.....? or, What are all the things.....?
2) Freewheel: Hang loose; relax, don’t be afraid to be what you are. Have a direct, uncensored connection from your head to your mouth; say whatever you think.
3) Quantity is wanted: Keep those ideas rolling just as fast as you can. Don’t worry about quality - just keep spitting ’em out.
4) Tag on: If you start to run out of ideas, build on those ideas which were already said, even if you only change them slightly.
5) Defer judgement: Anything you say is good. Don’t judge yourself or others. Now is the time for ideation – we’ll select the best choices later. Don’t hesitate to say it. Never mind if it sounds dumb or unoriginal, or we already tried it forty-seven times and failed each time, or it sounds too expensive. What you might think of as a silly idea can touch off a string of good ideas from others, or what they know might make your ideas possible. So speak out. Also remember that praise of an idea is judgement too.

To practice brainstorming, start with a problem question like: What are all the things I could do this weekend? and go for about ten minutes. When you’re finished you may find you have come up with some rather bizarre sounding ideas. But bizarreness is relative. Pick one of the ideas that does not seem very probable such as, “GO TO HAWAII FOR FREE,” and brainstorm that for five minutes: What are all the ways I could go to Hawaii for free? You might be surprised at how many ways you can can think up.

The fact that consensus decision making can provide high quality decisions, and brainstorming can generate tons of ideas for solving any problem in a short time are two reasons why interacting with a fully functioning group can be very fun and extremely rewarding.
We ended the meeting with details of the next one. Everyone be sure to wear comfortable dark colored grubbies and shoes that you are willing to get wet.

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**NASA’s LOST ON THE MOON TEST ANSWERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>NASA’s!</th>
<th>NASA’s REASONING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX OF MATCHES</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NO OXYGEN ON MOON TO SUSTAIN FLAME; VIRTUALLY WORTHLESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOD CONCENTRATE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>EFFICIENT MEANS OF SUPPLYING ENERGY REQUIREMENTS; EATEN THRU TUBE APERTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFTY FEET NYLON ROPE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>USEFUL IN SCALING CLIFFS, FIRST AID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARACHUTE SILK</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>PROTECTION FROM SUN’S RAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLAR POWERED PORTABLE</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NOT NEEDED UNLESS ON DARK SIDE (SUITS ARE HEATED) THEN NOT VERY USEFUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEATING UNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TWO .45 CALIBER PISTOLS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>POSSIBLE MEANS OF SELF-PROPULSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE CASE DEHYDRATED</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>BULKIER DUPLICATION OF FOOD CONCENTRATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>PET MILK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TWO 100 POUND TANKS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MOST PRESSING SURVIVAL NEED</td>
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<tr>
<td>OXYGEN</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>STELLAR MAP (OF THE MOON’S CONSTELLATION)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PRIMARY MEANS OF NAVIGATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-INFLATING LIFE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>CO2 BOTTLE IN MILITARY RAFT MAY BE USED FOR PROPULSION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAFT</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAGNETIC COMPASS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>MAGNETIC FIELD ON MOON IS NOT POLARIZED, WORTHLESS FOR NAVIGATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 GALLONS OF WATER</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>REPLACEMENT FOR TREMENDOUS LIQUID LOSS ON LIGHTED SIDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNAL FLARES</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>DISTRESS SIGNAL WHEN MOTHER SHIP IS SIGHTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST AID KIT WITH INJECTION NEEDLES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NEEDLE FOR VITAMINS, MEDICINES, ETC., WILL FIT THRU SPECIAL APERTURE IN NASA SPACE SUIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLAR POWERED FM</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH MOTHER SHIP, BUT FM REQUIRES LINE-OF-SIGHT TRANSCEIVER MISSION AND THEREFORE IS SHORT RANGE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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MEETING #3: ADVENTURE AND CONFIDENCE

Thursday, 1/30/75

I have been asked how you can get permission to lift manhole covers and go hiking in the sewers, hop freight trains, climb in the attics and basements of public buildings and the like. My answer is that you grant your own permission. By practicing a few skills, by being as aware and as thinking as you can be while engaged in such activities, and by taking full responsibility for all of your actions, it is okay for you to go adventuring. And that's what this meeting is all about.

The physical skills necessary for successful adventuring are rather straightforward. In addition to being generally physically fit, they are thinking down and rolling when you fall. Thinking down is a centering, balancing, and calming control technique taught in the discipline of Aikido. Thinking down refers to the maintenance of the specific physical attitude of feeling all of your mass concentrated at your Ki point, located three inches below your belly button. Practice thinking down while walking along a straight line, your arms and shoulders relaxed, your hips loose, flowing along. Practice starting and stopping without wobbling or waving your arms to retain your balance. You balance by thinking down and being in control of the position of your mass instead. When you feel comfortable with this, try walking easily across a fallen log over a stream. Have someone give you commands of "START," "STOP," "TURN AROUND," and have them give you feedback on how relaxed and in control you are. Keep your eyes on their eyes or towards the horizon. This is how you present yourself to others, your walking presentation. Strive to be centered, no trying doesn't work here. Simply be centered. It's a very special and very good feeling, and you get better at it, of course, thru conscientious practice.

We in Twentieth Century American society have been taught to balance by thinking up, our mass in our shoulders. We recover our balance by wildly waving our outstretched arms. We have been trained to concentrate by gritting our teeth, scrunching up face muscles, bunching up our shoulders, straining our necks till the tendons stand out and drops of perspiration drizzle down our foreheads. This can be termed point concentration, and it's not always best. What good does gritting your teeth do when you are trying to open the lid of a peanut butter jar? Nothing. It is wasted energy, scattered intention, and on top of that it's bad for your teeth. The next time you're attempting to remove a tight lid, or try to loosen a lug nut or crack a Brazil nut) take a deep breath, first, and then think down. Become aware of and use only those muscles absolutely necessary to the job at hand, letting everything else be relaxed. Smile and breathe smoothly. Feel your energy flow from your Ki point thru the few muscles you're actually using, then shoot off to infinite, and see if the jar won't open almost by itself. Try it. This manner of dealing with the Universe can be called field concentration. You concentrate on the whole interwoven and interdependent field of events occurring simultaneously with what your are attempting to accomplish, and energize any and only those events which will assist you, none of which diverse or dilute your efforts. This is a generalizable technique.

Continue your thinking down practice by picking two points on the floor a meter or so apart. Stand on one and while thinking down, leap to the other landing in perfect balance. Keep repeating this maneuver until you are in control and it feels very comfortable and natural for you to do. An excellent place to practice your balance is in a dry riverbed, or a wet one if you dare) rockhopping from boulder to boulder. When you are good at single leaps, practice a whole string of them flowing from one to the other yet prepared to stop on each rock (and also prepared for the rocks to move under your weight, which they will do occasionally). No arm waving allowed. THINK DOWN (!)
At about this point it’s good to know how to roll when you fall. Our typical reaction to falling is to throw our hands and feet out in front of us to protect our bodies. Sometimes this works, but often at the expense of our hands and feet. I have seen many a scraped hand, knee, elbow, and chin resulting from a simple trip-up while running or a spill from a bicycle which need not have been incurred had the person reacted to the emergency by rolling instead. And it pretty much has to be reacting because there’s no time to think. Your body’s initial response to discovering it’s flying thru the air on an unplanned collision course with objects unforgiving must be to tuck and roll.

The roll I suggest you learn is commonly referred to as a shoulder roll. If you stand legs spread, arms raised out and up, you make a big X. There is an imaginary line running from the tip of your right hand (if you tend to be right-handed. If you’re southpaw do just the opposite.) down diagonally across your back and down your left leg, one stroke of the X. When you bend down touching your right hand to your left foot you have just connected the ends of this line together to make a circle, and this is the circle on which you’ll roll. It’s best to do your practicing on a soft lawn with no sprinkler heads around, or a deeply padded carpet well away from sharp furniture.

To prepare for a roll brace your closed right hand by holding your arms out straight in front of you, palms down, and reaching over and grabbing the back of your right wrist with your left hand. (Remember, do just the opposite if it feels more comfortable to you.) To begin the roll bend down, place the side of your braced right hand on the grass about fifty centimeters in front of your feet, tuck your head till your chin touches your chest, and then sort of lean forward and push yourself over with your legs. Try to roll along that line down across your body. First the side of your right hand touches, then right elbow, right shoulder, roll diagonally across your curved back, down the outside of your left leg which is slightly bent at the knee, and when you gain some momentum you can stand right up again. Thinking down of course.

You shouldn’t try this roll unless you’re at least a little bit in rough and tumble shape. Once you can roll as described above fairly smoothly, begin your rolls by taking a step forward with your right foot and placing your braced right hand out in front of you a little bit further. This gets more exciting when you have a friend lie out flat and you shoulder roll over him. As you get more confident and flowing have your victim bunch up onto his knees. Now take a little running start as you dive and roll. It’s important to absorb a lot of the initial shock with your braced right hand and then soften the impact as much as you can with each successive part of your body that touches. Pretty soon you’ll find you’re able to do running diving shoulder rolls on concrete without a scratch, and you should practice this a few times just so you have the confidence.

By imagining how you would bounce around in the one-sixth gravitational field of the Moon you can accept throwing your body about a little easier here on Earth. The situation is essentially the same. We’re so accustomed to the everpresent downward pull here, and because we barely do the minimum amount of exercise to allow us to walk on this planet, the concept of executing a smart shoulder roll is foreign enough to us, let alone leaping tall buildings with a single bound, something not entirely impossible on the Moon.

To help program yourself to roll immediately upon detection of a probable crash landing, as clearly as you can and for several evenings in a row, just before you go to sleep, visualize yourself clearly beginning to fall and instantly assume and successfully completing a perfect shoulder roll, remembering exactly how it feels from your practice sessions. The more precise the detail of your image, the more firmly it will be set in your mind as an automatic response. This programming by visualization
technique, too, is a generalizeable skill.

After discussing the ideas above, and practicing the associated skills we broke up into groups of three to five persons and each team chose one of the inconspicuous looking brown paper bags stashed neatly in the corner. Every sack was a Mission, an Adventure, an opportunity to put into practice all that we had just learned. Envelopes stapled to the outsides held sets of instructions, which if followed one step at a time would guide the groups thru little known highlights of the San Luis Obispo area. A cave hidden amongst mine tailings and rubble on the side of a hill, labyrinths of hot water pipes and air conditioning ducts under a large old building, a narrow hand-hewn stone walkway along the edge of the tunnel thru which a stream meandered under the town. The bags contained any necessary equipment and supplies. Everyone was excited. My parting words were something like, "Be careful. Keep thinking down. Use consensus decision making. Practice your best sneak, stalk, and hide. And empathize; help each other out. You're on your own. In case you get arrested — memorize my phone number; I'll be here. Good luck!" And they were off into the night, planning to return only after their Missions were accomplished.

A sample series of instructions from one of the Missions was:

NOTE #1
1) From here, find your way to room 52-B05 of the old science building on campus.
2) Now this next part has to be done quickly; quietly, and carefully. Along this hall way, just before the stairs that lead down to the road, giant eucalyptus (YOU-CAL-A-Peed-US) tree, and As Engineering/English building is a manhole (personhole) cover. Walk up to it. Lift it to the side. Climb down the metal ladder. And slide the cover back over.
3) Contents of your bag may be useful. Bag contained one jar, two candles, and two packs of matches! Go straight — first left — first right. Continue till you climb down another ladder.
4) There will be a door to your left. Leave things as they are, but feel free to explore.

NOTE #2
1) Return down stairs. Find exit opposite to way you got into the room. Follow it to its end.
2) Turn around and backtrack. Take first left and then another left. Go thru door.
3) Find your way outside by using left door.
4) Search along edge of building and find a brown paper package. Dispose of contents as you see fit. Continue.

NOTE #3
1) Return to 1415 Stafford Apt. C-2 for some hot homemade apple pie and story telling.

About an hour and a half later, after one or two groups had returned, the phone rang. I (Clint) answered. It was Bill Blakely. There was a typewriter clacking away in the background. Bill's Mission was to identify Umbellularia californica (California Bay Laurel trees) in the dark, locate an irrigation pond way off on the edge of campus, and retrieve a floating one gallon container from its center. Bill said that while they were attempting this, campus security had rounded them up and they were now in jail requiring $150 bail. I asked Bill if he was really in jail. He said yes. I told him I happened to have $150 cash on hand and was on my way over to bail them out. So Roser Taber and I drove off in his lit-
The Volkswagen bus and spent the next hour visiting both the city and county jails only to find that our distressed group was not incarcerated at either place. So we returned to the apartment and guess who greeted us at the door? Right. It was a prank. Kat Felkner was the background typist, not some police secretary. Pretty good, huh?

Well, there seems to be a differing of opinion as to what is an acceptable prank and what isn’t. Are such qualities as style or class or skill involved? Is out and out lying against the rules? What are the limits? What’s fair or okay?

Bill thought I was on to them from the start, that I’d lied about the money and lied that I was going to the jail to bail them out. He thought I was on my way to the house, from which he was calling. Needless to say, this disparity in views led to quite a discussion on honesty, trust, boundaries of interaction (unlimited, you say?), and future group activities. It brought some realness into our midst, and tho a little harsh it was somewhat sobering. The confrontation could also be seen as a challenge, a test. We could deal with it and go on, or we could shy away and weakly pretend the problem didn’t occur. We chose the former. And I’m sure we could have handled it better than we did, but we did our best and decidedly went on.

So the meeting was over. Somebody asked if there was anything on for next week. Had anyone planned a meeting on their own?

A good question. It’s built. The engine is roaring and it’s racing down the runway. Now we see if it flies. There were no more pre-planned get-togethers. If the group was to go on, someone had to generate within himself a meeting concept, put it together, call it to order and be responsible for it. Tho we usually met Thursday evenings, there was no preset time or place. If interest died, so would the group, to keep things in their proper perspective. Unlike an institution, the group existed to serve a purpose, fill a need. When it lost this function it could not go on. No bureaucrats were hired to keep useless gears moving for the sake of keeping the people together, so it was not safe or secure. But there would be little wasted energy. Would it work?

The room was as silent as the inside of a large loaf of bread. But only for a moment. Ken Till dissolved the thick quiet by inviting us all to his place next Thursday night. He’d planned a meeting.

We were flying!

The following is a brief description of each of the experiences we created together and shared with each other over the next four months.

4) Feb. 6. At Ken Till’s out Hiway 1, with the aid of a strobe light, Ken led us ir out of our alpha levels, along a color walk, and thru various other mental exercises and experiences he’d collected. Ken too believes that the greatest unexplored area lies under your hat.

5) Feb. 13. Tom Judd called a meeting to order and from scratch and one of Tom’s favorite recipes we created several different flavors of hand made ice cream. If you shake up cream you really do get butter!

6) Feb. 23. A Sunday. Phyllis Goldman proposed a no rules potluck breakfast at Paul West’s house. We ended up with three different kinds of homemade pies, sausage, and some avocados. Who us? SKOAD freeks? Then Phyllis and Deborah Williams did a little skit portraying how people don’t often speak exactly what they’re thinking. At their direction we drew our life lines including on them all the major events of our lives, then divided into groups, shared our sketches, and entered into some intriguing discussions.

7) Feb. 27. Kat Felkner held a meeting at her round house in Atascadero. At the previous meeting we each chose little yellow slips of paper naming an attitude or exercise we were to try out prior to the meeting. In the discussion Bud Martin shared with us a very impressive self-portrait that was part of his task.

8) March 6. William E. Blakely held a meeting at Hathway House.
We talked about the implications and meanings of eye contact. Sat around and diverged for awhile, even attempting the unlikely project of naming our group.

#9) March 8. A rainy Saturday. We met at a stationary store in town where we could get cheap photocopies; each of us with two lists. One was of all the things we knew about, were interested in, could do well, and could teach maybe, and the other was all the things we wanted to learn about, or learn how to do. Swapped copies of lists, went to Paul West’s, and broke up into pairs or groups to see if we could fill each other’s needs and wants.

#10) March 27. Jerry White requested we each bring an object that represented ourselves to a meeting at his house on Islay. We feasted on Jerry’s soybean burritos and talked into the night.

#11) April 3. Robert Brady was into parapsychology. Way out Hi-suera Street at his apartment we attempted some psychokinesis experiments, listened to and discussed Robert’s thesis, and swapped experiences in the realm of psychic phenomena.

#12) April 10. Branch Point. At his Stafford Street apartment, Clint Callahan III had two meetings ready to go. The choice was up to the group. Do we work on the electromechanical device step ladder where the object is to move up the rungs by understanding the workings of ever more sophisticated devices — you can’t work on moving up one until you have helped someone else to understand a device with which you are already familiar. Or do we talk about doing a Fall Quarter Experience?? Somewhat to Clint’s surprise, Fall Quarter was opted for. We began making plans. See "BRANCH POINT" section.

#13) April 17. By Deborah Williams’ invitation, we met at her Bu-chon Street house and discussed Ayn Rand’s theme: the Self and the theory of Individualism.

#14) May 1. Paul West at Paul West’s house (surprise!). We divided into groups and followed Paul’s direction sheets dictating walks based on various frames of reference. Returned and discussed the possibility of a Universal Reference Frame. (We didn’t find one.) Then, writing, we each filled in the details of an adventure story for insight and self analysis.

#15) May 8. Al Friedman invited us all to Kat’s new house for a potluck supper. Bring something no one has eaten before. We tasted beef tongue, calf brains, grits, kasha, dried bananas, Jerusalem artichokes, rehydrated freeze-dried carrots, peanut butter and cucumber sandwiches, some kind of tea, boiled sweetened-condensed milk, and FART cake; made with refried beans. After our meal, using Al’s rather direct questions as guide lines, we split into groups for the purpose of growing closer to each other. Some of us visited a hospitalized Phyllis later with samples of all the goodies. She was having her prognosis adjusted after a river rafting accident.

#16) May 15. Carl Rosenberg arranged for us to use Room 220 of the University Union. He supplied a stack of cardboard and tools, and passed out slips of paper describing unexpected objects that we were to construct. Your imagination is all that limits the applications of the materials you work with.

ADDITIONAL MEETING TOPICS

Once into the mind set of thinking up meeting themes, every new experience or novel approach takes on an added dimension and becomes a possibility, so we found ourselves with many more meeting concepts than chances to implement them. Following is a compilation of many of these ideas for your pleasure.

We begin with Charles A. Reich’s list of some of the aspects of the
human condition which could be further explored thru the medium of Thursday Night Meetings. (22:166) The rest of the entries by no means even begin to exhaust the infinite variety of interesting and growth stimulating meeting subjects:

Adventure. Travel. The Yukon, the Hebrides, a blizzard, fog on the Grand Banks, the lost cities of Crete, climbing on rocks and ice in elemental cold and wind.

Sex. Experiences with many different people, in different times, circumstances, and localities, in moments of happiness, sorrow, need and comfortable familiarity, in youth and in age.

Nature. The experience of living in harmony with nature, on a farm, or by the sea, or near a lake or meadow, knowing, using, and returning the elements: Thoreau at Walden.

Physical activity. Chopping wood, carrying a boat, running, walking, climbing, experiencing heat and cold, swimming, building a house, paddling a canoe.

Clothes. Clothes to express various moods, and to express the body, its strength, its shape, its sensuality, its harmony with the rest of nature. Clothes for fun, for work, for dignity.

Morality. Having a moral stand with respect to something happening to oneself, to others, or to society; maintaining that stand, and giving it expression.

Bravery
Worship
Magic and mystery
Awe, wonder, reverence
Fear, dread, awareness of death
Spontaneity
Romance
Dance
Play
Ceremony and ritual
Performing for others
Creativity. In more primitive cultures, creativity and art are part of everyday life, and each person has an opportunity to exercise his creative side.

Imagination
Mind-expanding drugs
Music as part of daily life
Multimedia experiences. Music, light, smell, dance, all together.
Alterations of time. Staying up all night, getting up before dawn, sleeping all day, working three days straight, or being wholly oblivious to measured time.

Seasons. Observing the four changes of season by stopping other activities for a while and going to some place where the change is fully visible.

Growth, learning, change. Constantly learning new things, experiencing changes of feelings and personality, continually growing in experiences and consciousness.

Harmony. Enuf time and reflection to assemble various experiences and changes into a harmony within the individual, relating them to each other and to earlier experiences.

Inner life. Introspection, reflection.
Responding to own needs. Staying in bed when the need is felt, drinking a milk shake on a hot afternoon, or stopping everything to watch a rainstorm.

Own special excellence. Having enuf independence to disregard other people's standards of excellence, and then pursue your own.

Wholeness. Being completely present with another or completely given to some experience, rather than being partially withheld as most roles de-
Sensuality. Being sensually aware of all the stimuli at a given moment: smell, temperature, breeze, noises, the tempo of one's own body.

New feelings. Experiencing feelings or emotions qualitatively different from those previously known.

Expanded consciousness. Experiencing previously unknown kinds of awareness, new values, new understanding.

New environments. Experiencing a new total environment long enough to make adjustments to it and understand its terms (such as six months in the tropics).

Creating an environment. Taking whatever elements are given, natural, human, and social, and making a unique pattern out of them as one's own creation.

Conflict, disorder
Suffering, pain
Challenge
Transcendence
Myth making and telling
Literature, art, theater, films
Bare feet
Aesthetic enjoyment of food
New ways of thinking, nonrational thoughts, new ideas
Ability to listen to others
People: Perceiving them nonverbally, seeing the uniqueness of each one, creativity in relationships, exchanging experiences, exchanging feelings, being vulnerable with them, friendship.

Affection
Community
Solidarity
Brotherhood
Freedom

Learn to identify and try eating local edible plants.

Do brainstorming practice exercises.

Play the Un-game.

Do basket weaving. Visit a museum to see how well the Indians did it.

Express feelings in clay. Do pottery, slab, sculpture work.

Paint a mural as a group. Include goals, desires, and plans.

More potluck meals with rules: no meat, only meat, all wild, all grubbed, all artificial, all protein complementary; all people must be blindfolded, everyone brings raw ingredients (flour, carrots, lentils, cheese, etc.) then improvise, and be sure to use all that was brought and to make at least three courses.

Assemble and play homemade musical instruments, or put together a body band, then orchestrate and perform a concert.

Divide into pairs and take each other blindfolded on mystery trips.

Divide into groups and find places to sleep in the city, free food, free matches, improvised candles, and other things which would be useful to know in an urban survival situation.

Build and operate a human computer, having each person perform menial tasks which when done in sequence accomplish a larger goal.

Learn rock scrambling, or bouldering.

Practice sneak, stalk, and hide.

Have simulated emergency situations.

Learn film-making and make short films to share, or to assemble into a larger production.

Have a write-in.

Practice photography.

Do some silkscreening, and batik.

Make some stained glass creations.
Make bagels.
Kill, pluck, clean, cook and eat chickens, pigeons, squirrels, rats, snakes, snails, frogs.
Brainstorm 200 uses for a paperclip.
Learn the fundamentals of fencing. Have a war.
Learn about explosives and make bombs.
Learn juggling.
Eat organ meats like eyeballs, brains, kidneys, intestines, stomach.
Practice empathy.
Braid a yucca rope and then do some rappelling.
Make a bathtub full of jello.
Learn mind control basics such as meditation, alpha-level relaxation.
Learn and practice massage techniques.
Allow everyone to do something they've never done before.
Pair off and have each person tell his partner three good things about him, then say five good things about himself.
Brainstorm the topic for the meeting when the meeting begins.
Play psychology or self-improvement games from counseling center or books.
Design gadgets for super home/car/jet/submarine/spaceship/etc.
Make lists.
Make lists of lists.
List everyone's favorite books.
Compile an encyclopedia of awareness exercises.
Make arrowheads.
Eat bugs.
Be eaten by bugs.
Learn macrame. Invent our own designs.
Go star and planet gazing. Figure the time, date, and position on Earth from the stars.
Do a life goals workshop from Alan Lakein's book: "How to Get Control of Your Time and Life." (12:)
Do a weekend or week long survival trip.
Build sand castles.
Play children's games like jacks, hopscotch, tether ball, etc.
Do a hitch hike rally or treasure hunt.
Practice working in leather or sewing.
Learn how to shave in the woods.
Learn mountaineering skills.
Write a grubby's handbook and directory.
Organize and perform a magic show for ourselves.
Wear masks and walk around town to see people's reactions.
List and explore the Seven Wonders of the local area.
Practice thinking techniques — memory, deduction, creativity, symmetry, continuity, limits, three dimensional geometrical transforms, isomorphisms between minds, modeling, intuiting, etc.
Look for "programs" in common activities, acceptable attitudes and untested assumptions. Plan and execute strategies to sidestep them.
Have a Crisco party.
Skinny dipping.
Figure out and practice a more efficient way to sleep.
Examine advertisements in all the media.
List all the unexplained or strange occurrences on the planet, like Easter Island, Eocene Bible, Atlantis, flying saucers, Bermuda triangle, etc., and draw up some feasible explanations and generalizations.
Practice mental telepathy, and other forms of ESP.
Improvise printing methods — potatoes, erasers, ink on body, homemade dittoes with rubbing alcohol, etc.
Practice faking it, ad-libbing. Give everyone a situation or topic and have them act out a skit, write a story, or give a speech without any
pre-planning. Then go out and do it in public situations people didn’t
think they could handle before.
Learn some basics of soft martial arts.
Have a slingshot battle with marshmallows in a park at night.
Have everyone learn and share something completely new from a book.
Fry a hotdog with twelve volts, then shock yourself with fifty kilo-
volts.
Bake bread, make pie from wild fruit, make pickles or olives.
Learn to ride a motorcycle or unicycle or horse.
Learn gymnastics.
Play knee tag.
Practice healing techniques on each other.
Have art conversations - draw to each other.
Get some video equipment and do a workshop where people can see them-
selves move and interact, under pressure and relaxed.
What are all the questions people think are worth finding answers to?
Make graphs of all the world trends and project them into the future.
What do they say? Where are we headed? What will the future bring?
Go on an expedition to experience a foreign culture within the city.
Then try visiting people who speak a different language, perhaps even in a
different country. Compare and contrast all aspects to life in the U.S.
Go on guided fantasy trips or past-life regressions.
Perform exercises from an actors improvising workshop.
Learn about and practice Re-evaluation Counseling.
Play non-competitive games: full circle rotating volleyball, fris-
bee, mott suite padle ball, etc.
Improvise songs, poetry, epic tales, ballads, or folkdances.
Wash each other’s hair.
Create and practice cracking codes and ciphers.
Tie each other up and see if you can escape.
Stick pins in your body til you can do it without causing pain.
Practice with archaic weapons: sling, blowgun, boomerangs, bolo, etc.
Everybody cry.
Practice vomiting at will.
Answer and discuss the following questions:
Do you ever experience depression?
What makes you feel guilty, if anything?
Do you think you are "ambitious?" If so, what are your ambitions?
Are you goal oriented?
Could you be happy living like your parents?
In your own words, what is "love"? In what ways do you express love?
How do you like love to be expressed to you? Do you define "love" and
"in love" the same way?
Have you ever been embarrassed? If so, what was the situation? Do you
embarrass easily?
Do you respect yourself? Why?
Do you like yourself? What do you like the best about yourself? What do
you like the least?
If you had a limited amount of time to live – say one month – what would
you do that’s any different from what you’re doing now? Are you afraid of
dying? Do you believe in life after death?
Do you believe in "God?" What is "God?" Are you a religious person?
Do you ever pray? If so, why? What form does it take? What results do
you get?
Do you think a person could ask you a question that is too personal?
What do you think of the attitude "I’ll try anything once?"
Have you ever felt hate? What have you hated? Why?
Have you ever wanted to be someone other than yourself? Who? Why?
If you could change instantly anything you wanted about yourself, what
would you change?
Do you believe in fate?
What could you sacrifice for another person?
Under what circumstances could you kill someone?
Under what circumstances could you kill yourself?
Do you believe in the institution of marriage? Do you ever want to have children?
Do you feel that you are patriotic? What would you do "for the sake of your country?"
What celebrated person, past or present, do you admire? Why?
What are your "morals?" Are you a "moral" person?
What do you think was the biggest influence in shaping your life or personality?
What would you do differently if you had the chance to live your life over again? Anything?
Do you have a "basic philosophy" by which you conduct yourself? If so, what is it? What are your rules? Do they ever change?
Do you feel you are tactful? Is it good to be tactful?
Do you feel you are honest? Are you open about yourself with others?
What is the best way for someone to get to know you better?
What is the most important thing in life to you, generally and specifically?
Do you think physical love (sex) is important? Why?
Do you plan on being content holding down the same job for, say, twenty years? If so, what kind of job would it be?
Do you have any dreams? Do you expect them to come true?
Have you cried in front of others in the last five years? Have you cried when alone? What makes you cry? What makes you sad?
Have you ever been afraid? What do you fear?
Which sense is most important to you?
What do you want done with your body after you die?
Do you feel you are competitive?
What is your definition of "independence?"
What do you think about "free love?"
What irritates you?
What are the characteristics of your ideal or model human being?
Do you procrastinate?
Are you organized? Is being organized good?
Are you "responsible?" What does "responsibility" mean to you?
Are you "secure?" What does "security" mean to you?
Are you "free?" What does "freedom" mean to you?
Do you have control over your situation? Your health? Are you generally at cause in your life, or are you more an effect of your environment?
How well do you feel you deal with most other human beings?
How well do you feel you fit in with most other human beings?
Do you know what you want? What is it?
What would you really like to be doing now?
Do you represent yourself to others as you really are?
Do you have any habits? What are they? Do you like them?
Are you a specialist or a generalist?
What causes do you support?
Be silent and alone for at least an hour (anywhere and anytime) — explore.
Keep notes on how other people react to what you do (or don't do) or say (or don't say). See if you can provoke some reactions. Be aware and alert to seemingly insignificant things.
Observe people you see for a day. Not just those you know. Note interesting things.
Delve into a fear of yours and make yourself not fear it again.
Spend two hours doing normal things, but do them blindfolded.
Do find out who your next door neighbors are, those you don't know.
Talk to a senior citizen. Ask his opinions on everything. Find out where his head’s at.

Pass out awareness task notes to be accomplished by next meeting, including two which read identically: Find out who has the other note like this WITHOUT ASKING OR TALKING DIRECTLY ABOUT IT, and when you succeed, be together and alone for an hour or so, communicating without the use of words.

Make up a game or adventure that is a "people learning about people" kind of thing.

Listen, listen, listen, all day to everyone’s conversations. Write down whatever strikes you.

Draw what you want to say to the group – individually or as a whole. You can too draw.

Draw what you think or see being alone for an hour.

Invite a teacher, priest, or politician to dinner until you get an acceptance. Ask them important questions and get to know them.

Find someone from a different lifestyle or culture than you are familiar with and find out as much as you can about them.

Use only the hand you don’t normally use all day for all things.

Eat as many different foods you’ve disliked previously as you can fit into a day’s breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Do something for someone and don’t let them know you did it.

Notice very carefully for a day your reactions to what others do and say.

Make something for someone you want to get to know better. Give it to them. Tell them what the object means to you and tell them why you gave it to them.

Try to be as aware as you can of your body. Lie down and tune into your breathing, hunger and thirst ranges, your pulse rate, and then into your full metabolism. Check the differences between the times you were hungry, after you ate or slept, when you were active and when you were still. What did you find?

Talk about being educated versus learning. What are all the ways you can think of that you’d like to learn?

List the three things that most motivate the actions of your daily life.

Observe people interacting thru body language. Practice reading people.

What are all the things Human Beings are capable of doing?

Practice increasing self-confidence thru learning skills, gaining knowledge, improving attitudes.

Make a list of all the places you’ve always wanted to go and go to one of them.

Practice creative discontent, staying out of the rut.

Do Transactional Analysis exercises.

Practice rational, logical, problem solving techniques. Now try solving similar problems using intuition and magic.

Learn to mentally handle and enjoy the unexpected, the unsolid.

Practice concentrating while others intentionally try to distract you.

Make faces, share scars. What are all the things you can do with your body?

Have feedback sessions. How do I come across to you as a Human Being? Have each person write a prescription to the others on what they could best do to become a better person.

Build a crystal radio from odds and ends found around the house, and understand how it works.

Do a serious rain dance. Make it rain.

Hold a seance. Make contact with the other side.
If you were to write a book, give a course, make a movie, run for office, start a newspaper column, or in some way attempt to share your own values with others, what would be the general content of the message?

While attempting to reach the goal of intense self-assessment, what are the things which you might include in your research?

Get to know each other better. Four distinct facets to interpersonal relations are: Mental, Physical, Emotional, Spiritual. Group discussions are very heavy on the Mental, but lacking in the other three areas. Intelligent talk and philosophical rhetoric are interesting, but they're also very safe and cold, shallow. There is rarely sharing of plain, honest emotions. Also, thinking and talking are not the same as acting. Divide up into groups of about four people each and see if you can set to know each other better. Try to be with those people whom you know the least. Here are some ideas for questions which might help you to get started:

What was your very first impression of me?
If you were to think of me as an animal, what animal would I be? And why?

What do you think are my greatest strengths? My greatest weaknesses?
Do you think I have a realistic self-concept?
If I could do one thing to improve my relationship with you, what would that be?
Well, okay folks. You said you were interested. Let's figure out exactly what it is you're interested in, and see what we can do about it.

Here's the proposition:
* That eight to twelve of us self-motivated and self-directed, energized, positive freek types each develop for ourselves a personal curriculum of exploration, study, and practice of whatever we most desire to learn about and experience, designed to fit into a ten week time period.
* That we synergize our individual plans with each other's where advantageous and desired.
* That we generate a temporary, fairly secluded and basically self-contained back-country environment including all the systems involved, which we can freely use as our base of operations.
* And that from September 20 thru December 13, 1975, instead of attending our regularly scheduled Fall Quarter classes at college, we do our own Fall Quarter Experience.

What do you think? Do you want to attempt this?
"YES!" about fifteen people responded. "Let's do it."

That evening we brainstormed a list of everything we thought would be involved in our project. Everything we should learn about, talk about, locate, figure out, plan, design, cost out over, inquire on, decide, make lists of, and practice prior to engaging in our adventure. A slightly edited version of that list is as follows.

- Soliciting new blood, preparation sessions, funds, grants, financial aid, documentation, land: how much?, how?, where?, credit for school?, insurance, remoteness, immediate task designation, dates, cost estimates over the period, legalities, general group philosophy, general overall goals and approach, types of shelter, fortifications, guard at the camp, food: canned, dried, native: ecological impact, curriculum scheduling, camp design, preparation for cold and rain, climate, electricity, building tools, supply trips or self-containment?, level of technology, transportation: jeep, bicycle, foot; heat: gas, wood; lighting, library, water, first aid and medical emergencies, guests and visitors, communication with the outside, personal and group belongings, entertainment: types and times; killing animals, degree of environment modification, privacy and autonomy, drugs, sex and such morals, government: leadership versus anarchy: rules and how to enforce them, apathy, cleanliness, required group involvement, methods of group growth, assignment of chores, how to deal with conflicts, safety: allowable risks: murmering in the ranks, nudity, taboos, male and female roles, maintenance of equipment, group projects such as living without appliances, learning methods of survival, building a house, alternative farming techniques, living without society, making a movie, learning about such things as self-sufficiency of mind, habit forming, deferring, transactional analysis, transcendental meditation, biofeedback, gestalt, sustained intimacy, individualism, understanding communications, deepening individual relationships, and group cooperation and interaction.

We thought it wise to begin meeting at a time other than Thursday so as not to disrupt the flow of our Thursday Night Meetings by excluding people not interested in the Fall Quarter Project. During the remainder of the school year and throught the Summer we kept in touch and met periodically. At these meetings we dealt with all the tedious practical aspects of causing our desired situation to come into existence. What's the cheapest way to buy toilet paper and how do we ever figure out how
must we’ll need? Must we really bring two frying pans? How do we have
light at night without electricity? What does everyone like to eat?
Where do we get land and what do we use for shelter? And precisely how
much is this all going to cost?

As we carried on it became more and more clear as to who was going
to do Fall Quarter and who was just playing with the idea. The true doers
out and worked; scrubbing bananas and nectarines; slicing and drying
the fruit, collecting five gallon plastic pickle buckets and cantaloupe
crates – the building blocks of our future camp, talking with any and
everyone about borrowing property, editing lists, calculating costs, and
all the little detailish jobs which aren’t obvious but which are funda-
mental to the art of making dreams come true. Yet, even after all of our
intricate planning, there came a day towards the end of the Summer when we
simply had to sit down and ask each other, "Are you really going to do
this thing?" There were just five who declared, "I am."

Part of the planning included designing our personal curricula. What
are all the things I want to spend my time doing for these ten weeks, ex-
actly? And how and in what areas can we synthesize these schedules to max-
imize our effectiveness and productiveness. These original lists of sub-
jects-to-learn-about and projects-to-accomplish will give you an idea of
where we were headed.

PHYLLIS: learn animal photography; document our experience into a
slide show; learn and practice new and different communication systems;
learn telepathy; achieve proficiency in survival; electronics; become a
weapons expert; bike and auto mechanics; Aikido; physics and chemistry;
weaving; learn to make explosives; play harmonica; read books; learn to
climb a rope; experience alternate education.

ED: self-hypnosis; autogenics; meditation; cooking and nutrition;
Yoga; music – writing, theory, playing; survival methods; practice bio-
sy, botany, entomology, psychology, sociology, groups; learning; educa-
tion; knowledge of self; Utopia.

KAT: reading; study music, piano, recorder, guitar, photography,
wood, leather, survival skills, alpha-lab, ESP, Aikido; learn people, ar-
chery, tennis; Yoga; writing songs; write books; physics and electronics
learned from others; weave baskets; make knives.

CLINT: go thru a good engineering handbook to tie all my physics to-
gether; gravity; work out parameters involved in a community based on
change, personal growth, learning, love, and repudiation; learn and
practice ESP ad infinitum; work out and shoot survival movies; read my list
of books; design several alternative systems for an energy sufficient and
efficient house as part of the same style community.

AL: turn my potential into reality; become a person of action; com-
pare the efficiency of the standard educational system to a personalized
system.....an experiment in alternate education; increase my inner
strength and ability for minimal dependence survival; self-confidence
boosting; reduction of self-imposed limitations; personal growth leading to
self-satisfaction and improved interpersonal relations skills.

In addition to the above, we compiled lists of our projected weekly
time schedules for our personal curricula, classes we could offer to each
other, personal equipment we planned to have with us, and books we were
going to bring or owned for others to use.

And finally, after some intense consideration, we decided to accept
the invitation to use Susan Wellbank’s father’s land in Baja California
Sur, Mexico, even tho the complicated matters immensely by throwing in
an entirely new dimension to the experience: visas, a foreign language,
and all the intricate and subtle unknowns involved in dealing closely with
a culture, a people, and a set of rules far different from those to which
we were accustomed. Failings just slightly in any of these areas could em-
peril our whole endeavor, not to mention our freedom and well being.

Somewhat frightening thoughts. And I’m still not sure whether it was with
blind faith or well-founded confidence that on September 18, 1975, we loaded up both vehicles till they were bulging at the seams and headed south from San Luis Obispo, having no more than a hand sketched map drawn from Susan's memory to guide us to our new home, over fifteen hundred miles away.
It should be understood that as we set out to develop and organize a functioning camp, we had no idea what the parameters of our environment would be. Two feet of snow by the middle of November? Close, rule-bound, repressive neighbors? Abundant local edible plant or sea life? One-hundred degree Fahrenheit heat and complete absence of water? We didn't know. But we had to start planning, so our initial investigations were general in nature. Only after our final land decision was made could we tailor fit our total camp system. Included then, herein, are first our general design concepts with outstanding reference materials listed in the REFERENCES section, and second, our customized versions of the systems we actually used. In some instances this preplanning was either trivial or too dependent on the characteristics of the camp sight to be done in depth beforehand. In these cases, how we actually dealt with the problem is the most interesting aspect, and this is more appropriately discussed in WHAT REALLY HAPPENED as noted below.

We approached the problem by dismantling the hypothetical situation into erasable pieces and then choosing to individually investigate those areas which held the most interest for us. The contents of this chapter are arranged in the same order as the following breakdown of systems:

A) LAND.................................................................50
B) SHELTER SYSTEM.................................................51
C) FOOD SYSTEM - GRUBBING.................................54
   - THE FOOD DRYER........................................57
   - DRYING FOOD..............................................60
   - CHICKENS, GEESE, AND RABBITS.......................62
   - MENU PLANNING CALCULATIONS.........................64
   - STORAGE.....................................................68
   - KITCHEN EQUIPMENT LIST...............................69
D) WATER SYSTEM..................................................70 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
E) SHMEK SYSTEM..................................................71 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
F) HEAT AND LIGHT SYSTEM......................................73
G) TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT SYSTEM............................73
H) TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.................................75 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
I) EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM.....................75 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
J) INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM......................74 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
K) LIBRARY SYSTEM...............................................74
L) FIRST AID AND MEDICAL SYSTEM..........................74
M) EMERGENCY SYSTEM............................................74 see WHAT REALLY HAPPENED
N) FINANCIAL SYSTEM.............................................74 see FINANCES
A piece of property on which to set up camp, water not too far off, people preferably the opposite, temperate climate, and free, were the criterion of our primary concern: land. Without land we couldn't set off the ground, so to speak, so we attacked on all fronts at once. Our brainstorm responded to the question: What are all the ways we could get to use a piece of land suitable for our Fall Quarter experience for free?
- put an ad in the school newspaper
- personally contact possibly interested professors who might have access to land they'd be willing to let us use
- state of California school system: get a grant for alternative education experiment
- check with U. of California, Santa Cruz, or any such experimentally oriented school and see if they have some program which might be willing to assist us
- put ads in "Mother Earth News" and related periodicals
- write letters to presently operating communities - see if they have spare land or know of any
- homestead
- register a mining claim
- tell everyone we know and everyone we can think of what our project is and what we want

As usual it was the least expected attempts that paid off. Friends of friends. Four locations were eventually offered us. Susan Wellbank's father's plot in Baja California was the last to pop up and seemed to be the most ideal. We took it. But the other opportunities and the persons making them available to us were highly supportive and honestly thoughtful. Here is an actual invitation extended to us:

June 5, 1975

Dear Ed,

The self-styled learning experience, which you folks are planning for this Fall, sounds very interesting. We would like to encourage you in this effort and offer you a location for your experience on our land at Etna. Such use, we feel, should be limited to no more than twelve participants, with the understanding that you would be entirely responsible for yourselves and any visitors, your relationships with each other and with the environment.

Our greatest concern is regarding the personal safety and health of each of you, that you realize that many personal hazards exist, and that we are in no way able to assume any responsibility for any problems which might arise. The weather in the area begins to get frosty at night about the middle of September and may drop to below zero later on. Cold rain is very likely, and maybe several feet of snow before the middle of December.

Our feeling regarding drugs, (including alcohol and tobacco) is that they generally do more harm than help for a person, and should not be used, except as prescribed by a doctor.

Next to our concern for you, personally, is our concern for the environment. Probably most critical is the high fire danger. It would be necessary for you to check with the California Division of Forestry (office in Yreka) for requirements regarding fires and use of any combustion appliances or equipment. If there were to be any smoking at all, it would have to be limited to a specially prepared and designated fire proof area.
Erosion is another problem which must be avoided with particular care. Muddy roads cannot be driven on without leaving ruts which may then wash into bigger channels.

You mentioned a concern about possible sanitary pollution. I expect that an out-house type facility might, or might not be adequate, depending on location. You might be interested in the copy of an article on the Clivus Toilet which I’m enclosing. I understand that a fiberglass fabricating company in Sacramento was licensed to make and sell these in 1972.

If you were able to use firewood, I expect there would be enuf dead and down wood available to meet your needs. We’d rather not have any live trees cut, except by special permission.

Clean-up, when you finish, should leave the site as clean as when you start.

We’ve wondered if there’d be any problem about a building permit for your temporary shelter.

It’s possible that we might be wanting to do some forest improvement work (thinning, pruning, etc.) up there this Fall. If this should develop, I expect there wouldn’t be more than two people involved and that needn’t be any major interference, one way or the other.

If you want to use our place, we can work out a more specific agreement, which should be signed by all participants.

Best wishes as your plans develop.

Sincerely,

SHELTER

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THE ARMCHAIR CONTRACTOR

On the beach in Baja, five of us spent a stuffy, smelly, soggy night cramped together, along with all our valuables, in a nine by nine foot tent. Nobody slept much, but we figured one such night out of two months was bearable. Had we lived in a different climate, that canvas seive would not have sufficed. Fortunately we ended up on the warm, dry sands near San Jose del Cabo.

Preparing a shelter for an arbitrary location is both difficult and foolish — the variables are too great. But in this case, we had no choice. Our destination was not decided until two weeks before leaving, so we had plenty of time to worry about keeping our heads dry and our feet warm.

Because I (Ed) am into thinking more than doing, I spent a lot of time theorizing about shelter. Not much of this was implemented, but it did give me a fair picture of how deep the water was. A little pre-planning can save a lot of nails.

These are my lists, pertaining to my situation, and reflecting my values. They are a springboard.

SHELTER
Activities: sleeping, cooking, eating, studying, group meetings,
relaxing, playing, entertaining, learning activities, encountering, crafts, reading, disposing of waste, storing, cleaning up

Systems:
1. Storage
   a. kitchen goods - utensils, pots, pans, food
   b. tools - electrical, knives, ax, construction, automotive, sewing, leather, bicycle, drafting, drawing
   c. learning supplies - books, paper, pens, pencils, camera, photo accessories, chemicals, musical instruments, typewriter, tape recorder, ropes, strings, straps
   d. other - sporting goods, medicine, first aid supplies, vehicles, toiletries, clothing, energy sources, fuel, maps, compass, survival goods

II. Snarling - stoves, oven, table, chairs, shade, ventilation, insects

III. Sleeping - beds, bams, bunks, bungalows, cots, mattresses, privacy, comfort, heat, protection from elements

IV. Studying, Learning
   a. indoor - desks, tables, chairs, night lighting, accessibility of books and supplies, quiet, photo processing, group learning
   b. outdoor - work areas, field trips; sunlight, weather limitations, organization, orderliness

V. Entertainment, sports, assorted foolery - music, volleyball, jokes, storytelling, discussions, exercise

VI. Environmental considerations - rain, snow, hail, wind, heat, cold, humidity, dark, sunlight, shade, insects, erosion, soil stability, water, trees, grasses, dew, frost, clouds, slope of land, dust, animals, rocks

VII. Important variables - walls, floor, ceiling, fasteners, sealant, size, thickness, spatial arrangement, number of structures, cost, openings, doors, windows, time involved in construction, insulation

VIII. Cleaning up - sweep, no food, waste container, wash, patch, waterproof, make beds, dusted, air circulated, putting things back where they belong

SHELTER SHOPPING

After deciding what we wanted out of shelter, we started looking at ways to get it done. We expected to be limited to a few choices due to our budget and time limit, but we found quite a number of viable alternatives: cardboard, construction plywood, plastic sheet, fiberglass tube, parachute, earth walled, scrap lumber, tents, shingles, sheet metal, plastic panels, bamboo, lean-to, hole-in-the-ground, and pie-in-the-sky. Of all our restrictions, cost limited us the most. We wanted to do it for free.

THE CARDBOARD CRAZE

For some innocent reasons (economics), I thought a cardboard dome would be our most practical shelter. A couple of books had some good sections on building with cardboard, so I started to pursue the idea. Cardboard was light, easy to work with, possibly scrounged, reasonably strong if used correctly, cheap, temporary and disposable. With good workmanship and proper care, a cardboard dome would have kept us warm and carefree. But....they tend to leak like crazy! Waterproofing is essential and tricky; if they get soggy they're shot; they don't insulate so well; a cardboard floor doesn't work; a strong storm brings the roof down, and it's hard to find enough usable cardboard being thrown out. With these points in mind I sincerely continued my research.
I called some companies and was quoted bulk prices on three by six and five by nine foot sheets of 200 pound test, single corrugated cardboard. The prices were not unreasonable. For filling edges, blue guns with pellets could be bought at hardware stores. Strong, waterproof tape is also necessary for wrapping exposed, cut edges. Waterproofing resin, found at marine supply stores, was proposed, as well as epoxy paint, tho I don't know which would be best to use or even how they work.

I do know that the strength of cardboard lies in the two outer membranes; the corrugation just keeps the skins apart. So for maximum strength, don't cut, score, or puncture the surfaces. I have, however, heard of stapling cardboard sections together. Rolling an edge once under itself improves resistance to the elements. Strong blue will keep it tight. And fastening the cardboard to the flooring is an important and non-trivial operation. Mud won't do.

SCRAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

Altho building with cardboard sounded innovative and exciting, it was perhaps a bit capricious. I mean, wasn't there some story about a few pigs and a wolf with strong manners? To be truly economical, we only needed to keep our eyes open and our hands fast. Plenty of old buildings sit unwanted and sincere inquiries will net piles of cheap if not free lumber, steel siding, shingles, glass, acoustical panels, concrete foundations, used nails, bricks, tiles, and on and on. It's primarily a factor of being persistent, prepared, and in the right place at the right time. Most of these free materials are not light or easily portable, but a little ingenuity could provide a quick and simply constructed weatherproof shelter. And if you only get a few pieces of any one material, you could always concoct a shelter stew. See "Handmade Houses" for ideas.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

I did little or no investigation into the various new materials available, but some product might fit both your needs and your wallet. Plastic sheeting needs a frame, but goes up easy; it can be suffocating, and wind is a problem. Parachutes can be bought cheaply but they leak and blow around a bit. You can even go as exotic as synthetic rubber Hypron panels joined together with a waterproof zipper. Other materials are frequently noted in both "Shelter," and "Domebook II," listed in REFERENCES, and architectural magazines often run articles on new products. Perhaps some company will help finance a structure to advertise the special materials they manufacture.

ON THE BEACH

"Yes to dance beneath the diamond sky
With one hand waving free..."  — B. Dylan

When we chose to experience Mexico, our shelter plans were altered and drastically simplified. The weather permitted it, and the distance demanded it. What follows is a list (our group thought highly of lists) of our actual shelter needs for the two months we lived in Baja.

- One nine by nine foot canvas tent used for storage of books and wet papers.
- A fifteen by fifteen foot blue and yellow plastic and nylon tarp, supported on driftwood poles and anchored by guy-lines tied to rocks buried in the sand. The afternoon winds often forced us to let the tarp down.
- A six by eight foot canvas covered with two ponchos shading a dun-out rectangular study area. Supported like the blue and yellow and having similar wind problems.
- An unshaded kitchen consisting of a three by six foot piece of five eighths thick plywood resting waist high on sideways-turned wooden
cantaloupe crates which doubled as cupboards. The bulk of our food we stored in five-gallon plastic pickle buckets which we also used for chairs. I wanted to bring a chaise lounge, but I didn’t want to appear extravagant.

- We each were issued one cantaloupe crate to use as a dresser, clothes closet, and bedside stand.
- The guys slept on army surplus cots, Phyllis had a foam sleeping pad, and Kat slept on the thickness of a poncho. We all used sleeping bags, but me and Al bundled in blankets after our bags were liberated out of the back of the truck one day. We slept under the blue and yellow tarp.
- One yellow, pearly plastic toilet seat mounted on a crate and balanced carefully over a hole in the sand (ask Al how to dig holes in sand) at a safe but convenient distance from the kitchen. Good view of the ocean and a very popular spot with the tenants.

The total cost of our shelter was under twenty dollars. Most everything was owned, borrowed, or scrounged from restaurants, supermarkets, and the beach. We lived cheaply because of our great location and fortunate weather. Usually shelter will require more research, more construction time, and more money. Be aware of the possibilities.

FOOD SYSTEM – GRABBING

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Why not? I mean, really, why not? Of course it does take a certain attitude, but the attitude appeals to both reason and conscience, so why not? And then there is the problem of awareness; without an attuned awareness neither logical nor moral arguments can lead to proper action. And isn’t proper action what we are all striving for? Well, then..... why not?

Alright, what I (Ed) am building up to is a little talk about grubbing. Grubbing is defined as the procuring of thrown out, ignored, leftover, or otherwise unwanted goods. We grubbed quite a few things for our Mexico trip: pickle buckets, cantaloupe crates, water jugs, wood, and most important of all, food. I am consistently amazed at the amount of food the major supermarkets toss out. All you have to do is rummage thru their garbage bins and take what you want.

Ugh! Yech! Garbage bins? Disgusting!

Yes, yes, we’ve heard it all before, and those are the attitudes we need to bend some. First of all, a lot of the food the stores throw out is still very edible. A slightly rippled package, day old bread, a bag of potatoes with only a couple of rotten ones, grapes off the stem, cheese with a little mold on it, vegetables that must make way for fresher vegetables, dairy products a day past their selling date, and dozens of other items the store figures it can’t sell. And they’re probably right. I wouldn’t pay much for it, but I’ll sure take it if they’re going to throw it away.

Secondly, most of the food is not physically harmful or disease ridden or contaminated, and if it looks the least bit suspicious, you don’t take it. When you’re getting free food you can afford to be picky. If something goes bad after you get it home, throw it out yourself, or better yet, compost it. Nothing lost. The point is, our country has developed some fairly strict regulations about what can be sold, and almost the stores must (and should) follow these codes, each individual sets his own personal safety standards. We do this all the time with leftovers or food
hidden in the back of our refrigerator, so why not extend our judgment into our grocer’s garbage can?

Now I want to stop being reasonable and turn a bit nasty. I simply cannot discuss scrubbing without getting upset about the amount of food we waste. It’s a disgusting and frightening reflection of the closed-minded, selfish American attitude towards consuming and wasting. We’ve not only stuffed ourselves into obesity, but we also throw away nearly enough to survive on. There’s just no consciousness about being a member of a world society and living on a finite planet. And I’m not saying we should lick our plates clean because people are starving in India; I’m talking about the danger of harboring wasteful attitudes. Wasting does not create happiness; it destroys appreciation; it gives a warped sense of power, it’s bad karma. People lose touch with the world, they no longer cherish the very essentials of life: food, air, water, and the delicate ecosystem enveloping us all. I still remember the day we smelled nineteen dozen eggs from one market. Nineteen dozen perfectly good grade AA large farm fresh quality eggs, and people just accepted it. I mean, I would have had a hard time giving those eggs away simply because the store had thrown them out. Now I’m not advocating that everyone should do their shopping in garbage bins. I just want to stress the importance of approving of scrubbing instead of turning our noses up at it. I don’t know! I’m at the point where I’m totally disgusted by anyone who scoffs at scrubbing. I know I’m overreacting, but my optimism for the future hinges on our ability to rearrange our attitudes, and I hate to see my optimism crumbling.

I’ll put aside my ranting and raving now and set into some of the how to’s of the art of scrubbing. All of my knowledge comes from a little advice and lore from fellow scavengers, and about two years of in the field experience. This is just one of those activities that you have to go do - there is no other way to learn about it. So don’t take anything for granted.

The most voluminous and consistent grub comes from the big supermarket and the larger local grocers. These places simply have more to throw out. But one thing should be stressed here: all stores are different. I don’t just mean Safeway is different from Albertson’s. I mean every single store. Some of them save all edible waste for local pig farmers, and some grind up all their garbage in big disposals. Some specialize in produce, some in bread, and some throw out practically everything. Usually I’ll find one or two stores in my area that provide a good return for my time and effort, and I’ll do the bulk of my scrubbing there. The selection process may take awhile. Simply cruising by each store once tells nothing; several visits at various times are necessary because timing is so important. Even the best stores have totally grubless days, and sometimes the garbage man or a fellow scrubber will have carted it all away before you get there. A little time invested right off will provide the necessary information for enjoyable and productive scrubbing.

Perhaps I should say a bit about the society of scrubbers. There exists an implicit “first come, first served” ethic which all scrubbers adhere to. I’ve yet to see anyone fighting over the food - usually I don’t see anyone at all. But I like to add the concept of need to the scrubbing ethic. I personally do not need to get free food, and I know that some people do, so I try to restrict my scrubbing to stores that no needy person grubs. It’s a difficult judgement sometimes, but it should not be neglected.

Altho I’ve never known a store to enforce it, scrubbing is technically illegal. For some reason there is a law forbidding a grocer to let people take his throwaways. Apparently, I as a scrubber could sue the store if I contracted some illness from eating their garbage. This reasoning strikes me as a bit absurd, but like I said, no store has ever hassled me, so I don’t worry about it. Two actions which should be illegal if they aren’t are (1) feeding people scrubings without telling them where it came from,
and (2) selling any grubbed food. I must admit that I disregard the former in some instances, but I do so with the understanding that I am fully responsible. Once again, there are a lot of personal judgements to make, so it definitely helps to have some sort of morality worked out.

Now before you start digging your hands into the first garbage can you see, let me offer you a bit of advice. First, grubbing can be a bit messy. (Have you ever stepped on an overly ripe banana?) So proper clothing is recommended. Wear your old jeans, shirts, and shoes, whatever you can get dirty in. You know, your grubbies..... Do not go barefoot unless you enjoy squashed tomato between your toes. Usually, you can avoid all the terribly ripe items, but when you're climbing all over inside the can, there will be times. Of course you might choose to become a leaning grubber by simply refusing to climb all the way inside the bin and limiting your take to whatever's in arm's reach. But that takes all the fun out of it. I mean, if you're going to get into it, you may as well get into it. Start in one corner and unpile all the boxes, carefully restacking them in the opposite corner, meanwhile picking out all the grub along the way. By the time you've reached the bottom of the bin, there will be a massive, threatening mountain of teetering boxes looming above you from the other side, so don't rock the barrel. Somehow you manage to escape to the top again where you begin the unpiling process in another corner.

Having a friend along helps tremendously. While you're digging around, hush sits above putting the choice item you've found into boxes as you toss them up. Besides, having two (or more) people adds to the excitement of discovery. And, believe me, unless you've tried all the different foods available inside the store, you're certain to run across some interesting surprises behind it. Since the food is free, there is no economic risk involved in trying new things. And often, some good combinations will arise, like a bundle of eggs and bananas, and suddenly you're trying out all sorts of new recipes. Grubbing definitely allows for an abundance of kitchen creativity.

Besides the immediate benefits, grubbing also demands that you brush up on methods of storing and preserving food. Most items you simply put in the refrigerator, as if you had bought them. But often a single day's find will provide such an enormous quantity of a single food that you know darn well it will take several months to finish it all, and if it is highly perishable, several months could turn it into a pile of, well, I won't get too graphic. So, you can either give some away, trade with other grubbers, or figure out a way to keep it in a usable form. Remember that nineteen dozen eggs I mentioned earlier? Well, rather than pump our bodies full of cholesterol, we considered freezing the extra eggs. Well, eggs do freeze we found out. All you do is stir in a little sugar or salt which helps keep them from getting lumpy when they thaw. Or suppose you have a friend from Fresno valley, California, whose dad knows the packing plant people, and you can go there and take your pick of the culls— all the fruits too ripe for packing but perfect for eating. I, fortunately, had just such a friend, and during the summer of 1975 we make a couple of trips to the packing plants and brought back, oh, maybe two hundred pounds of nectarines, peaches, plums, and grapes. Besides the preserves Clint made and all the fruit we dried to take with us to Baja California, we also gorged on pies, cobbler, fruit salad and smoothies. Not a bad deal.

The idea of setting two hundred pounds of free fresh fruit may amaze most people, and altho we did have to know the right person to get it, the fact remains that companies and stores across the United States throw away an astonishing amount of food and vast quantities of other usable materials. From their viewpoint, nineteen dozen eggs or ten crates of fruit doesn't mean much; it's not cost effective to dispose of it in any other way. But to you or I that much can feed us for months. I'm not proposing that these companies send all their thrown out but edible food to a central distribution center, because then the whole grubbing process would
come under regulation and our lives are already over-regulated as it is. I simply hope that enuf people in every community decide to give grubbng a try. That will assure on a local level that no food is going to waste. Even if you check out every store in your area and never find a thing worth taking, at least you know that the grocer's bin isn't full of good usable food. I don't, however, want to make grubbng into a moralistic crusade, so I hope people realize all the economic and attitudinal benefits they personally will reap. This just happens to be one of those marvelously reciprocal actions, where what is good for you is also good for society.

FOOD SYSTEM - THE FOOD DRYER

With this inexhaustable cornucopia of free produce available to us, and considering our intentions of gaining the Fall Quarter Experience by spending as little money as possible, I (Clint) thought it would be a good idea to figure out how to preserve whatever we could of these edibles for our use in Mexico in some way other than the eight quarts of jam I had already put up. Dehydrating it seemed an obvious answer. So how do you dehydrate food? What's a food dryer?

John Munroe in San Luis Obispo gave me some of his ideas on food dryer theory and suggested some rough dimensions when I called him from Los Angeles. He said, "Build it four cubits, by two cubits, by three cubits." "Right!"

The object seemed to be to circulate warm (105 - 110 degree F.) air over, under, around, and thru pieces of food laid out on some kind of suitable racks. Without further guidelines I guessed.

Working with the heating elements from a scavenged broken toaster and slabs of an industrial scrap laminate of aluminum sheeting on either side of a balsa wood core, I designed a two foot square, three foot tall, eight rack capacity, free circulating food dryer, and built it during the next three days. The only store bought components were plastic-coated fiberglass window screening for the drying racks, a light dimmer for controlling the temperature, epoxy, staples, and a thermometer. Total cost: about twelve dollars. And it worked. Keeping an eye on the thermometer for a few days allowed us to figure out how to adjust the heating elements in order to maintain proper temperature by compensating for a number of factors including outside air temperature (day or night), wind chill, sun exposure and number of freshly filled racks. MARK II will have a thermostat. We esoterically referred to our machine as the Hydrogen Hydroxide Entropic Phase Change Inducer.

Check out the diagrams on the next couple pages if you want to see how our dryer was, but don't let our design limit you. I used electricity for our heat source. Many others are available: sun, refrigerator and water heater waste heat, hot water pipes, fireplace, oven or furnace chimneys, etc. And there is nothing sacred about the layout or materials. I simply used what was on hand. Ninety percent (by weight) of our food dryer was grubbng. If you're thinking about building one, open your eyes. There are mountains of materials laying around you just waiting for your touch.
PLYWOOD
DOOR, TOP,
AND BACK.
WALLS AND
BOTTOM ARE
LAMINATED
ALUMINUM
SHEET ON
BALSA WOOD,
(BUT COULD BE
ANYTHING)
CONTROL
PANEL
PLUG
ANT

FOOD
DRYER

AIR
INTAKE
HOLE
(bottom)

#10 CAN
ANT TRAPS
USED
ENGINE OIL

AIR
ESCAPE
HOLES

HINGES

AIR-FLOW

THERMOMETER
LAYS ON A
RACK

WAVE HANDLE

DOOR
SWINGS
OPEN TO
LOAD RACKS

COAT
HANGER
DOOR
LOCK PIN

LEG
ARE
2X4'S

4 HEATER
PLATES
SIDE BY
SIDE ON
CERAMIC
SPACERS

~2 INCH
SPACE
BETWEEN
RACKS
BALSA
WOOD
RACK
SUPPORTS
GLUED TO
INSIDE
WALLS.
RACKS
REST ON
THESE.

RACKS ARE FIBERGLASS WINDOW SCREEN
STAPLED AND GLUED TO A BALSA
WOOD FRAME.

SIDE (SEE THRU)

Clinton 76
FOOD DRYER CIRCUIT DIAGRAM

Heater #1

Heater #2

Switch #2

Heater #3

Switch #3

Heater #4

Light Dimmer
Switch for Heaters #1 and #4

Main Power Switch
Drying food is actually a very straightforward procedure. The idea behind dehydrating fresh fruits and vegetables is that removing most of the water inhibits the growth of mold and bacteria, makes them more compact and light weight, and, if dried slowly and without too much heat, leaves most of the nutrients intact.

At just over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit a full batch of food required two to three days to part with its water. The bottom racks which were closer to the heating elements and, probably more importantly, not exposed to moisture from the rest of the racks below, tended to dry quicker, so about every half-day we rotated the racks. The dryer used less power if exposed to direct sunlight during the day and kept in as wind sheltered a place as possible during the night.

Ed became food dryer Master when we figured out that the cost of his utilities was included in his rent, tho it didn’t cost much to run the device. It would take a couple of hours to wash, cut up and arrange enuf food to fill all eight racks. Often two or three of us would get together for an evening of lively conversation and fruit slicing. The trick to laying out food on the racks is to get as much on there at a time without it being too close together. We wasted a whole dryer full of grated potatoes once by covering all eight racks solidly a half inch thick without any spaces. It is sufficient to say that the mess and stench was bad enuf that we never made the same mistake again.

Fruit or vegetables sliced one centimeter thick and spaced one centimeter between pieces seemed to work out best. The more perfectly ripe the fruit is, the better it tastes dried. We never used sulfur dioxide or any other kind of preservatives. And tho we washed the food we generally left all edible peels on. Our final products, with few exceptions, were superb.

The only difficulty we ever really encountered occurred when we initially erected the dryer on my (Clint) front porch. The problem was ants. Now the ants didn’t actually devour much or steal away with our food. It’s just that in trying to bas the dried edibles it became quite tedious picking fifteen or twenty of these tiny black crawlies off of each piece. We had to do something.

So I assembled some ant traps out of number ten cans open at one end, and filled them part way with used motor oil (see food dryer diagram). A viscous mote for each leg of the dryer ought to do the job, I thought.

Right. Ants aren’t that dumb. Within about a day one of their presumably more experienced scouts made his way expeditiously up the corner post and across the ceiling of the porch. When directly above the dryer this untauntable explorer released his grip and, hitting a bull’s eye, made straightaway for the goodies. Worker ants dutifully following the scout’s trail reached the fateful marker and unquestioningly let go their hold on terra-upside-down-firma. Provided it wasn’t too breezy, they landed square on the dryer and went to lunch. When satiated the critters exited in a like manner from the bottom. Now how can you beat that? I was impressed. We finally sidestepped these antics (don’t pass up the run) by moving our legged box to Ed’s patio— and made certain it was not under any kind of overhang.

Actually, I guess, there was one more problem. One night Ed went to load up the racks after a few days of disuse and found some weeds scattered about the inside. Figuring they were placed there by some neighborhood children, or the wind, he tossed them out. The next morning poor Eddie got severely interviewed by one highly irriitated roommate. Apparently the weeds were of a notorious and highly valued variety and the dryer was serving its purpose quite well.
The foods we attempted to dehydrate were apples, oranges, bananas, peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, grapes, pineapple, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, zucchini, string beans, and corn on the cob. In case you wish to try your hand at drying foods, we'll include here a few hints on each of the above, but don't let this list limit you. Dried avocado may be the best thing you've ever tasted.

Apples worked great. Cut them in half, scoop out the core with a spoon, then slice into rings and circles. The idea is to make each piece roughly equal in thickness so they all dry out at the same rate.

Oranges didn't work too well for us. There weren't enuf solids left after drying, they were difficult to peel off the screen, and they tasted a little bitter.

Bananas, bananas, and more bananas. Not quite thirty thousand pounds of bananas, but perhaps not far from it. One time we scrubbed probably forty pounds in one haul and there was no way we could cycle them all thru the dryer before some rotted. So, the weather being just right, we borrowed a stack of bread racks, cut up all that pasty fruit in our usual style—peeled, cut in quarters the long way, and then in half—and laid them out on the racks on Ed's roof to dry in the sun. And it worked.

These roof bananas were slightly more sour than those run thru the dryer, and we had to scrape green paint off of some, but the bananas proved to be a staple in our Baja California diet. A tongue tingling belly-stomping delight topping oatmeal with a little peanut butter and brown sugar.

Peaches, plums, nectarines, and apricots all dried perfectly. We tried dipping peaches in salt water prior to drying in order to prevent discoloration, but this had no effect. (Except, of course, to give them a salty flavor.....) We may have had black peaches, but they sure tasted good. The apricots were somewhat tough. Rehydrated by soaking, these delicacies were excellent either plain or baked in pies or cobblers. To dry, slice in wedges around the pit, or cut the same as apples. No peeling necessary.

Grapes we tried to dry whole but they rolled around and required too much time. Cutting each grape in half and arranging them all neatly on a screen took hours. We finally figured they weren't worth the trouble, tho the raisins we did make were delicious enuf to eat one at a time.

Pineapple, peeled and sliced was a real treat tho we only were able to scrub three or four thruout the summer. The difficult part here was refraining from eating all the pineapple before we got it either into the dryer or packed away in bags.

Tomatoes came out pretty much like the oranges. Not very much left and tough to get off the screens.

Onions dried okay but we'd sotten a real deal on a pound of said condiment and didn't really need more.

Diced green peppers turn out just like they're supposed to.

Potatoes we grated, peeled on, and spread out thinly to dry. They did fine. However we were besifted an entire box of fresh spuds just prior to departing and they lasted us the full two months on the beach.

Carrots got grated or sliced and dried well. We used a lot in various scrumptious shlok dishes.

Parsnips we grated and dried only because they kept showing up in our grub boxes and we could think of nothing else to do with them. Not very palatable. They don't make very good pies.

Zucchini was shredded or sliced and was another favorite shlok additive.

String beans came out a little tough and stringy, tho we managed to use them all up.

And sweet corn we hung up over a water heater by the husk and let dry au natural. When hard the kernals came off fairly easily and made excellent corn chowder and baked corn dishes. If we'd had a grinder it would have been fun to make corn meal.
Thus we set off with about seventy five pounds of high quality dried fruits and vegetables which we'd procured for nothing but our labor, and which would have otherwise been taken away as garbage.

FOOD SYSTEM - CHICKENS, GEESE, AND RABBITS

During our initial research we considered raising small animals such as chickens, geese, or rabbits as a self-sufficient homestead-like self-reproducing food supply. Jenny Keys and John Munroe usually had an assortment of fowl living with them around the old Johnson Street House for eggs and occasionally meat, and Al spent time experimenting with rabbits as a food source. Based on this experience we've collected the following notes.

After some consideration we abandoned the idea of taking this on as an aspect of our Fall Quarter Experience. Raising these creatures as a supplemental food supply is far better suited to a more long term and permanent set up than to our temporary environment.

However, should you consider attempting this yourself, we highly recommend that you head for Ye Olde Library and dive into some books and pamphlets written specifically to your interest. We hardly scratch the surface here. It may not all be as easy or romantic as it seems (Is anything?) but could be right for you. On to the notes.

CHICKENS

Chicken beasts won't start laying eggs till they are about six months old. Feed them thirty percent protein turkey starter for the first six weeks, then twenty percent protein feed with sixteen percent scratch. Leshorns are small white birds that generate large white eggs. Rhode Island Reds produce big brown eggs.

Once they are laying, chickens can fabricate about one egg a day for roughly nine months out of the year. I've seen seven chickens yield five eggs per day regularly.

Shorter daylight hours inhibit laying, so artificial light in the early mornings stretching the day to fourteen hours increases egg laying.

If a chicken won't lay eggs (Now, take this for what it's worth. I don't think I'd like it much if I were the chicken...) you can feed her only water till all her feathers fall out, and then start feeding again. She may start to lay. Of course, then again, she may not.

One rooster for every three to seven chickens will somehow cause the eggs to be fertile.

Twenty-five pounds of chicken feed at three dollars will last seven chickens about twenty days. This works out to about two cents per chicken day.

Chicken feed is cheaper purchased in bulk directly from the manufacturer.

It is basically not monetarily worth while to raise chickens on chicken feed for eggs or meat because you can buy both much cheaper at a supermarket.

However, chicken feed can be almost totally supplemented for free if you are a productive scrubber. Chickens need protein from scraps of old beans, meats, breads, or cheeses, and calcium from crushed oyster shells, bone meal, recycled egg shells, or milk products. Stale bread in outdated milk is an excellent food source and readily scrubbable from institutional cafeterias, restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores.
Chickens need a shelter to stay in at night. They will lay eggs there and stick around if they are fed a little. Cases should be predator proof.

Chickens and other fowl are susceptible to lice and other infestations of insects and diseases which need to be treated. There are also various worm clippings, black chopping, neutering operations that are regularly performed commercially.

Directions for killing and cleaning a chicken can be found in Phyllis’ Diary in the WHAT REALLY HAPPENED section.

GESE

Folks with lawns may wish to investigate geese as a source of beautiful, unique eggs. Goose eggs weigh about one third pound each and make a delicious, aesthetically pleasing sunny-side-up breakfast. And in addition, geese mow the lawn to just the right height while at the same time fertilizing it plentifully—perhaps too plentifully if you like to roll and play on it often. While geese appreciate old bread and lettuce now and then, they’ll do fine on nothing more than grass and water. A twenty-five by thirty foot lawn seems to be a good size for two geese.

Two varieties of geese are common. Chinese geese which are white with a bump on their forehead, are generally loud and ornery, and capable of delivering bruising bites. Al once said, “The quality of life has improved markedly since our only white goose consented to join in the Thanksgiving Day festivities.”

Chinese geese lay approximately one hundred eggs per year. Grey geese are the second common variety, and are much more mellow and easy going. They lay about fifty eggs a year.

Geese seem to be extremely sensitive to the emotions and thoughts of the people and creatures around them, and have been used as watch animals. Fresh goose eggs, less than three days old, have some unusual characteristics. They can be difficult to whip and near impossible to peel nicely if boiled.

RABBITS

Pellets in,
Pellets out,
That’s what rabbits
Are all about.

—Al Friedman, electronics scatologist

Input rabbit pellets contain all of a rabbit’s nutritional requirements. Rabbits CANNOT exist on greens alone. In fact, excesses of green foodstuffs (especially cabbage) can kill them. These furry critters have complex nutritional needs which I (Al) haven’t wanted to mess with. I’d suggest feeding them at least fifty percent high quality pellets made specifically for rabbits or doing a lot of reading and diet planning. Except for possibly aiding your rabbits digestion, lettuce is little more than candy. Carrots and potatoes have at least something to offer, but don’t expect to skim too much on pellets.

Rabbits must be kept dry and must have shade at all times. You will need to build cages, nest boxes, and feeding and watering bowls (perhaps automatic ones) which they can’t tip over or chew up. They’ll try. And by maintaining a warm friendly atmosphere for these quiet and gentle beasts you’ll be rewarded with calm animals more than happy to become totally involved in their favorite pastime....reproducing.

Put out whatever money it takes to buy high quality meat-type breeding stock such as Californians or New Zealands. It’s well worth the initial investment. With some luck, a bit of experience, and good stock you might reasonably expect to get a litter of seven to nine bunnies every ten weeks and achieve a feed to meat conversion ratio of four to one. The rabbit feed costs about nine cents a pound, which puts the price of a
A pound of rabbit steaks at around thirty-six cents. Young bunnies should be "harvested" at eight to ten weeks of age, freezing or trading what you don't use immediately. Mediocre quality rabbits are better eaten before they reproduce. A usable procedure for dismantling rabbits is described in the WHAT REALLY HAPPENED section.

Output rabbit pellets should be mulched for several months before being used in your garden. They will make your vegetables grow happily and create a haven for earthworms. Which, by the way, in your self sufficient, closed cycle, energy efficient, engineered biosystem and living environment, could prove to be a profitable link.

Plan on putting in some time and energy to make this project work for you if you desire it. Just to help you figure it, it is estimated that five-hundred does are required to keep an average John fully employed. There are many details to rabbit raising which I haven't covered here. You'd be wise to read at least one fairly recent book on the subject before attempting it. Older books include information on operating without rabbit feed. I recommend Robert Bennett's "Raising Rabbits the Modern Way," a three dollar and ninety-five cent paperback, to set you started. (1)

FOOD SYSTEM - MENU PLANNING CALCULATIONS

You go to the corner grocery store once a week and pick up whatever you think you might need plus some special sale items and goodies that please the eye - more of the latter if you're hungry. You might even be using a shopping list, replacing staples or seldom bought items. But it doesn't matter if you buy too much or too little, or if you forget something. It's a simple matter of using it up next week or returning to the store for more. You're working with an ongoing open system and your calculations needn't be very accurate.

But consider the problem of obtaining all at once exactly the amount of all foodstuffs required to healthfully sustain five individuals for twelve weeks without available refrigeration. Where do you begin? Especially if the lack of cooling implies the use of such unfamiliar foods as textured vegetable protein (TVP), buckwheat groats, triticale, and soy grits. How much of what do we need?

Attempting to grapple with this problem we tried three different approaches. The first was rather straightforward. Everybody write down everything you eat for the next week including rough quantities and the approximate time of day consumed. Now that was a jaw dropper. And quite amusing to discover others kept to a diet as irregular and strangely timed and coordinated as your own. (You might try it for a week or so yourself. You'll be amazed.) Our lists supplied us with an average calorie count for sedentary student life in the San Luis Obispo area climate. Not exactly accurate, but a hint.

Next we discovered Frances Moore Lappe's book "Diet For A Small Planet," and decided to base our diet around her protein complemented recipes. Normalizing them to five hungry people, we tabulated ingredient quantities through the book and came up with a good idea as to how much of these edibles we would use if we stuck to her style of meals.

Ms. Lappe also includes in her book some very useful numbers, so method three was by theoretical calculation. Theoretically, a person uses up ten calories of food energy per pound of body weight per day if hesh is in relaxed sleep, fifteen calories per pound day if hesh is a lazy city person, or twenty calories if hesh is a lumberjack (and is okay.....). The calorie we use here is really a Calorie, equivalent to the amount of
energy required to raise the temperature of one thousand cubic centimeters (one liter) of water one degree Centigrade. Fisurina we would be in a rather warm climate and our major activities during the day might be reading or writing, but taking into account more strenuous involvements like skin diving, hiking, and digging new shmek pits, we estimated seventeen calories per pound day. Our total body weights added up to an impressive eight hundred and seventy pounds, and we were planning for eighty-four days of food. Therefore, our total caloric need was going to be:

\[
\frac{17 \text{ cal}}{\text{lb x day}} \times 870 \text{ lb} \times 84 \text{ day} = 1,242,360 \text{ cal}
\]

or roughly one and a quarter million calories, about enough energy to make 3,500 gallons of boiling water from ice.

Hmmmhn. How about protein? Ms. Lappe defines a term she calls "useable protein" to be that quantity of amino acids in a food which is in the correct proportion to be fully utilized by the human body. She recommends a person ingest 0.28 grams of useable protein per pound of body weight per day (15:71-76). A little multiplication tells us we're going to need:

\[
\frac{0.28 \text{ gm protein}}{\text{lb x day}} \times 870 \text{ lb} \times 84 \text{ day} = 20,462 \text{ gm protein}
\]

or about forty-five pounds of pure useable protein.

In addition to taste preferences, calories and protein, there are vitamins, minerals, fiber content, cost, availability, storability, palatability, etc., which also must be taken into account and which none of the three planning methods we used could blend neatly together into an acceptable menu and shopping list. Perhaps a properly instructed computer could generate dependable answers. The only computers available to us were some little grey organic ones of the multiple holographic integration variety with an intuition option, weighing about five pounds each. They proved not useless.

In other words we sat down and guessed.

The way we guessed was by constructing a hypothetical meal structure and menu plan. The meal structure was the eighty-four days broken into a ten day cycle of which each day began with either a set-it-verself granola breakfast or a rotated-one-person-in-charge cooked breakfast. On granola days, the responsible person would whip up a batch of whatever kind of bread we felt like making, so we had fresh baked bread every other day. Lunch was a no-big-thing-eat-if-you're-hungry sandwiches, leftovers, or dried fruit deal. Dinner and clean-up was on a straight rotation basis. By the end of a cycle, or "week," each of us would have baked bread once, prepared a hot breakfast once, and cooked two dinners, all charted out on a posted duty roster. This procedure worked excellently.

The menu plan, then, followed the above structure like this. Forty-two of the eighty-four breakfasts would be granola. So how much cereal is this?

\[
\frac{1.5 \text{ cups}}{\text{person x meal}} \times 5 \text{ persons x 84 meals} = 20 \text{ gallons}
\]

We brought along fifteen gallons (forty pounds) and returned with half of it. Our worst guess. It was poor quality granola and acquired a distinctively disagreeable taste as it staled, making it low on the palatability scale. People ate other things.
Peanut butter was guessed at:

\[
\frac{3 \text{ Tbsp}}{\text{person \times \text{day}}} \times \frac{5 \text{ persons}}{} \times \frac{84 \text{ days}}{\text{year}} \times \frac{1 \text{ cup}}{16 \text{ Tbsp}} \times \frac{3 \text{ lbs}}{5 \text{ cups}} = 47 \text{ lbs}
\]

We toted thirty-nine pounds and the last peanut butter sandwich was devoured on our way back home. Perfect.

Bulgur wheat was estimated so:

\[
\frac{1/2 \text{ cups}}{\text{person \times \text{meal}}} \times \frac{5 \text{ persons}}{} \times \frac{10 \text{ meals}}{\text{week}} \times \frac{1 \text{ lb}}{3 \text{ cups}} = 8 \text{ lbs}
\]

and that worked out perfectly too. In this way we calculated appropriate quantities for rice, instant nonfat dried milk powder, TVP, etc., until all the meals in our plan were covered. The previous research we had done with personal eating habits and recipes gave us a feeling for proportions. And we weren’t off by much.

At the time we were setting the groceries together, Clint was working in a restaurant thru which we were able to purchase food at wholesale prices. The granola and TVP we bought almost directly from the factory. And at the last minute a friend, Elaine Hale, bestowed us with a fifty pound box of potatoes and fifteen pounds of dried lima beans. The edibles we bought with us were supplemented by assorted home-made Mexican cheeses, local eggs, fresh caught fish and sea snails, a rabbit, dinners given to us in Mexican homes, tacos from taco vendors, sodas, banana spleets, pan dulces, various fresh from the market place fruits and vegetables, Phyllis’ Dad’s Care Package, and five kilograms of salted, dried shark meat we received as a reward.

We’d planned to buy whole wheat flour, brown rice, and beans in Mexico, only succeeding in the last. All we could find was white flour and Mexican white rice with little rocks in it—at no extra cost!!

Alfalfa sprouts were to be our fresh green vegetable, but hesitance to waste precious drinking water in rinsing the sprouts off, and the fact that they needed care three times a day due to the heat impeded our success. We did however raise one batch to maturity, and topping soy bean fetafei patties on our hand-patted tortillas with a spicy sauce made one of our more refreshing meals.

So, at long last, here is a list (another list…..) of the food we used up (food originally obtained less the food we had left over) on our three month stay in Mexico.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican white wheat flour</td>
<td>120 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soy flour</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rye flour</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bran cereal</td>
<td>3 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn meal</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oatmeal</td>
<td>17 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pinto beans</td>
<td>8 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lima beans (dried)</td>
<td>6 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican pink beans</td>
<td>8 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soy beans</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>split peas</td>
<td>3 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican rocky rice</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole grain triticale</td>
<td>2.5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toasted kasha (buckwheat groats)</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hominy grits</td>
<td>3 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soy grits</td>
<td>7.5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bulgur wheat</td>
<td>8 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>millet</td>
<td>6 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toasted wheat germ</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole pearl barley</td>
<td>3 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>granola</td>
<td>20 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>macaroni noodles</td>
<td>12 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresh potatoes</td>
<td>50 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raw shelled sunflower seeds</td>
<td>2 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole shelled almonds</td>
<td>5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alfalfa seeds for sprouting</td>
<td>6 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dried fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>50 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dried salted shark meat</td>
<td>5.5 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dried onion flakes</td>
<td>2 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spices</td>
<td>assorted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking soda</td>
<td>1-1 pound box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking powder</td>
<td>3-7 ounce cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt (not including salt water)</td>
<td>1 pound 10 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cornstarch</td>
<td>1-1 pound box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinegar</td>
<td>1 pint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark molasses</td>
<td>1 quart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honey</td>
<td>8 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dried baker’s yeast</td>
<td>1 pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetable oil</td>
<td>2 1/2 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetable shortening</td>
<td>2-3 pound cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark brown sugar</td>
<td>47 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crunchy peanut butter</td>
<td>39 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomato sauce</td>
<td>36-12 ounce cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomato paste</td>
<td>12-6 ounce cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomato ketchup</td>
<td>4-20 ounce bottles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared mustard</td>
<td>1-24 ounce jar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peach jam</td>
<td>3 quarts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanilla extract</td>
<td>6 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bouillon</td>
<td>100 cubes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soy sauce</td>
<td>24 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonfat dry milk crystals</td>
<td>43 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVP: beef, chicken, and ham flavored, each</td>
<td>7 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutritional yeast</td>
<td>.5 ounces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The problem of storing all this food for three months, protecting it from mice, the neighbor’s pigs, and the weather had us stumped until Ed showed up one meeting after working at Foster’s Freeze, toting a green plastic, five gallon bucket with a wire handle and an air tight lid. He’d grubbed it. Over the summer we collected thirteen of these pickle buckets and four white plastic three gallon pails. In addition to weather and critter proof bins, (provided, of course, that the critters weren’t too big and nasty. A rhinoceros, say, wouldn’t have had much difficulty in stealing our oatmeal from us.) these containers made excellent camp chairs and back rests, tho they left funny red words imprinted backwards on bare bottoms. We filled them so:

GREEN BUCKETS: 1 unbleached flour
2 brown sugar
3 granola
4 granola
5 granola
6 granola
7 crunchy peanut butter
8 instant dried milk powder
9 instant dried milk powder
10 instant dried milk powder
11 noodles, beans, and seeds
12 a potential toilet

WHITE BUCKETS: 1 lima beans
2 TVP beef strips
3 TVP minced ham
4 TVP chicken chunks

But then there were foods such as cheese, eggs, fresh meats, vegetables and fruits that would keep much longer if they could be kept cool. Some how.

Our original description of the land we wanted to use included an icy stream running right thru camp. Based on this picture we’d planned to store our perishables in a shaded, covered, plastic ice chest set directly in the creek, with the cool fluid perhaps flowing in one end and out the other. However there was nothing even slightly resembling a cool babbling brook anywhere near our home away from home in Baja, so we had to think of something else. How about an evaporation type refrigerator? We suspended a wooden crate above the sand by hanging it between two pieces of firmly anchored driftwood posts. We then placed a plastic tub on top filled with three gallons of sea water, and wrapped the whole crate with wetted burlap-like fabric, making sure the ends of the cloth were soaking in the basin. What’s supposed to happen is that water in the cloth absorbs heat energy from inside the crate (saining in entropy) and evaporates, thereby cooling the crate’s contents. As the liquid vaporizes, it draws more water out of the tub and into the cloth by capillary action, the same force that sucks water up into a dry paper towel. This new water will then absorb heat and evaporate, and the cycle will continue as long as there is fluid in the tub and cloth touching it.

Well, the idea is sound. Only, we were using salt water which left a crusty salt residue when it evaporated preventing further water from soaking into the burlap. The fabric constantly dried out leaving us with merely a shaded box. This, as it turned out, was all we really needed anyway.

Here is some other food storage information we collected and which you might find interesting or useful. Freshly laid eggs, if they aren’t
washed, will easily last two weeks at room temperature and will only be-
come a little watery in the process. Commercially distributed eggs in the
United States have all been washed so they must be refrigerated.

Al says the cheeses that keep best are sharp, aged cheddar, Edam,
Gouda, Provalone, and Parmesan. Dust cheese with baking powder, or wrap
in cheese cloth (Cheese cloth! So that's what it's for!) and dip in melt-
ed paraffin to prevent mold.

Our fifty pounds of Russet Potatoes was completely unterred the two
months we were on the beach and we lost nary a one. Don't know exactly
why. Did you know you can pressure cook a whole potato for ten minutes
and it comes out almost as if it were baked?

We didn't need to do this but if you wish to store dry goods for a
long period of time you can place them in a three to five gallon airtight
container, mix in about a half cup of crushed dry ice, place the lid on
loosely for half an hour or so til no more gas spills out, then clamp the
top on solidly. If the lid bulges because not all the frozen CO2 had
changed into gas before you closed it up, carefully lift an edge and
allow the excess to escape, being sure not to let any air back inside.
The carbon dioxide from the dry ice is heavier than air so it sinks down
over the food and replaces the air in the container providing an oxygen-
less inert atmosphere which is more ideal for storing foodstuffs. Mormons
sometimes use this trick when they are assembling their permanently stored
two year stash of food and supplies.

**FOOD SYSTEM - KITCHEN EQUIPMENT LIST**

Here is a listing of all of the kitchen gear we begged, borrowed, or
bought for our use during Fall Quarter. The original list was substan-
tially longer than this, however space limitations on the trip down de-
manded we eliminate extraneous baggage. So we got together one evening
and did some creative editing by consensus. The resultant inventory
proved itself more than adequate to handle the task of providing a base
from which we could at least improvise anything we found we needed.
## KITCHEN EQUIPMENT LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>double burner white gas Coleman camp stoves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>collapsible Coleman stove top oven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>double mantle white gas Coleman lanterns with fuel funnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>repair kit of spare mantles, globe, generator and pump parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>five gallon cans of white gas - obtain more in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>box of book matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>box of stick matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Presto six quart stainless steel pressure cooker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>five quart cast iron dutch oven with lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>large cast iron frying pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>four quart sauce pan with two quart double boiler and lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>nine by nine inch aluminum baking pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nine by five by three inch aluminum loaf pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>nine inch round steel pie pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>collander and wooden pestle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>steel grills for over a campfire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>large ceramic mixing bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>three gallon plastic basins for washing dishes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>one gallon plastic pour container for mixing milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>one quart glass sprouting jars with screen lids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>set of glass measuring cups, one half, one and two cup sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>set of metal measuring spoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>large plastic funnel for pouring drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>large wooden chopping board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12&quot; thin serrated kitchen knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>small kitchen knives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>knife sharpening stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>stainless steel food grater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>metal whisk for mixing milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>can opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>rubber bowl-scraping spatula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>wooden cooking spoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>large slotted spoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>stainless steel spatula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>abalone hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>pair chopsticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>sporks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>shlok bowls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>plastic drinking cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>potholder mitts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>dishwashing rags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>dish drying towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>plastic dish scrubbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>one gallon plastic storage containers with snap-on lids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>wooden cantaloupe crates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>four by six feet by one half inch thick plywood table top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>assorted cookbooks and recipe files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>roll aluminum foil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>bars Army surplus saltwater soap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>sixteen ounce bottle hair shampoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>seven ounce tubes toothpaste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>swampmeet special plastic toilet seat with matching lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>rolls toilet paper - buy LOTS more in Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEAT AND LIGHT SYSTEM

If we're planning to live out in the wilderness somewhere, how are we
going to get along without access to electrical power, natural gas lines,
streetlights, or nearby gasoline stations?
To attack this problem we first had to define our real needs and de-
sires with respect to power. What exactly were we planning to do which
would require some form of energy other than our physical strength, and
what are all the ways we could satisfy those needs? Brainstorm time. The
list of energy necessities was pared down to: cooking heat, light to read
by at night, and gasoline for our automobiles. This meant we were going
to be giving up the use of electric toothbrushes and blankets and can op-
eners and pencil sharpeners, heated rooms, hot water at the twist of a
tap, television, stereos, telephones, essentially all of the technological
luxuries operated by remotely generated sources of power. That is unless,
of course, we chose to rely on a portable electric generator. It wasn't
a long discussion before we chose the more primitive but less noisy and
far more independent option.

Provided we were careful about watching the gas gauges on our cars,
we would be able to obtain fuel from the gas stations in nearby towns
while we were errandng, unless we were situated more than half a tankful
distant from our source. Not very likely. Half a tank will usually take
a car at least one hundred miles, and we could always carry spare five
gallon fuel cans with us. Now, what about light and heat for cooking?

Portable sources of light energy include: dry cell batteries as in
flashlights, wet cell batteries as in automobiles, either of which could
be recharged by solar or wind or tidal power, candles, campfire, liquid
fuel lamps burning oil, kerosene, alcohol, or white gas; compressed gas
lamps using propane, butane, or natural gas (methane), or chemical lumin-
escence as in glow sticks or fire flies. We could also hope for a full
moon, much lightening, or perhaps a volcano, or nearby supernova.

Cooking heat could be solar if we only cooked during the day, wood
fire, or some kind of stove powered by any of the above mentioned combust-
ible liquids or gases.

We collected a pile of information on all of these sources of energy
and this data is tabulated below. The chart is not complete because it
soon became apparent that the one contingency we were going to base our
final decision on in this case: cost, lead to an obvious choice for us.
The most expensive aspect to providing light and heat was the appliances
themselves, the lanterns and rangees. In all cases but one we would have
had to rent or purchase outright these pieces of equipment at a high
price. With white gas, however, most of our families already owned an as-
sortment of Coleman camping gear which we found, upon inquiring, to be a-
vailable for our use, gratis. The cost to us was repair of borrowed e-
quipment to dependable standards, and a few spare parts. We took with us
two double mantle lanterns and a pair of two-burner camp stoves.

Al says we used one spare leather pump washer and about eight lantern
mantles during our expedition. Two of the mantles were destroyed by nosy
wasps, and the rest broke when the lanterns were transported no matter how
careful we were. Generators need not be replaced as they can be cleaned
with gasoline, rags, sand paper, and pipe cleaners.

The white gas we brought with us we'd purchased in bulk from a gas
station and stored in scrubbed five gallon containers. As our supply got
low we thought awhile and decided to try unleaded car gasoline instead of
the much more expensive imported white gas. It worked excellently in the
stoves, but quickly clogged the more delicate lantern jets. The bright-
ness of a two-element Coleman lantern is equivalent to a three-hundred
watt electric bulb, plenty of light to read by. This arrangement perform-
ed very well for us.
In the chart below, the listed costs for the various fuels is in 1975 dollars, and for petroleum products especially these are highly antiquated numbers. You'll need to locate your own up to date prices for these items. The quoted figures are only useful for relative cost estimates.

### COMPARATIVE FUELS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUEL</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>HOURS</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOUR</td>
<td>DAY</td>
<td>DAY</td>
<td>84 DAY</td>
<td>UNIT</td>
<td>84 DAY</td>
<td>DISADVANTAGES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wood</td>
<td>2 LOGS</td>
<td>5 HRS</td>
<td>10 LOG</td>
<td>84 LOG</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>Might be obtained for free, stumps etc free also, but is inconvenient and very dirty to use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Available whenever it's not too cloudy or dark, but present costs of collectors, condensers, regulators and storage is prohibitively high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$.04</td>
<td>Hook up to line current would be nice but if unavailable, generation by solar, wind, tides, nuke, etc., are too expensive. Gas generator is costly and noisy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tri-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KWH</td>
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<tr>
<td>city</td>
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<tr>
<td>alco-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Methanol is expensive, hard to find, and requires special equipment to use.</td>
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<td>hol</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH OH</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>GAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kero-</td>
<td>3 HRS</td>
<td>2.4 CUP</td>
<td>21 GALS</td>
<td>$.58</td>
<td>$12.18</td>
<td>Hard to light, smellier, greasier, and sootier than other liquids, too cheap.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lene</td>
<td>BURNER</td>
<td>GAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 CUP</td>
<td>5 HRS</td>
<td>1.25 CUP</td>
<td>7 GALS</td>
<td>$.58</td>
<td>$4.06</td>
<td>Hotter than white gas, but lantern not bright enough to read.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANTERN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>3 HRS</td>
<td>2.4 CUP</td>
<td>21 GALS</td>
<td>$.95</td>
<td>$19.95</td>
<td>100K BTU/GAL, all equip. Borrowed for free, grubbed 5 GAL storage cans, minor maintenance and repair costs, spare parts, etc. Weighs 6 LBS/GAL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td>BURNER</td>
<td>GAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 CUP</td>
<td>5 HRS</td>
<td>1.25 CUP</td>
<td>7 GALS</td>
<td>$.95</td>
<td>$6.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LANTERN</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Comparative Fuels Chart is continued on next page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUEL</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>HOURS</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>QUANT.</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOUR</td>
<td>DAY</td>
<td>DAY</td>
<td>84 DAY</td>
<td>UNIT</td>
<td>84 DAY</td>
<td>DISADVANTAGES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nat-</td>
<td>lural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Methane, if hook up to utility line is possible; okay, but not available as a portable liquid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro-</td>
<td>110K BTU</td>
<td>3 HRS</td>
<td>1.3 GAL</td>
<td>25.2 GAL</td>
<td>$.50</td>
<td>$12.60</td>
<td>91.5K BTU/GAL, 2550 BTU/FT3. Rent two 25 GAL storage tanks at $20/YR each, plus we'd need to refit cheaply obtained burners with smaller orifices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pane</td>
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<tr>
<td>burn-</td>
<td>RNER</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C H</td>
<td>3 8</td>
<td>10K BTU</td>
<td>5 HRS</td>
<td>1 GAL</td>
<td>84 GAL</td>
<td>$.50</td>
<td>$42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lan-</td>
<td>TERN</td>
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<td>bu-</td>
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<td>itane</td>
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<tr>
<td>C H</td>
<td>4 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120K BTU</td>
<td>5 HRS</td>
<td>1 GAL</td>
<td>84 GAL</td>
<td>$.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lan-</td>
<td>TERN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT SYSTEM

In order to successfully maintain and repair the machines we were bringing with us and to manipulate our environment in minor ways to make it more comfortable for us, we needed to have at our disposal a small but versatile set of tools. After deleting a good portion of our original brainstorm we decided upon the following list.

Instead of buying all this equipment for ourselves we elected to borrow it from each other. We agreed that if any of it was ruined or lost by the end of our adventure that the group as a whole would split the cost of repairing or replacing it. The FINANCES section shows what this eventually cost us. To keep track of what belonged to whom, we formulated a chart listing all the gear and all of our names. A check in the square where a name and a tool intersected kept all in order.

Our stash of equipment consisted of: one pair needle nose pliers, a pair of slip-joint pliers, a set of wire cutters/stripers, a claw hammer, cross-cut hand saw, axe with spare handle, two small and one large blade screw drivers, one cross-point screw driver, a brace and bit with full set of drill bits, a box of assorted nails, nuts, bolts, screws, washers, hooks, thumb-tacks, paperclips, bailing wire, rubber bands, and twine, a large funnel, two pair of work gloves, garden shovel, white blue, epoxy, duct tape, masking tape, cellophane tape, black electrician's tape, two c-clamps, one pair scissors, a ruler, twelve foot tape measure, one each of course, medium, and fine files, large and small adjustable wrenches,
socket set with ratchet handle, safety glasses, one tube of multipurpose
grease, coathanger wire, a folding shovel, large size bicycle pump, two
hundred feet of quarter inch rope, one hundred feet of nylon clothesline,
some pieces of sand paper, and a broom.

LIBRARY SYSTEM

The list of books we brought with us is included in the REFERENCES
section. Again, instead of buying all new books to study from we bor-
rowed what we could from each other. We kept all those reading materials
we weren’t using stored neatly on cantaloupe crate shelves in our nine-
by-nine foot green canvas tent for protection from the elements. A sign-
out sheet helped us locate the books we wanted but couldn’t find in the
library.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL SYSTEM

Recent physical exams plus yellow fever, typhoid and tetanus vaccin-
ations left us sore in the arms and rear but healthy and ready to become
involved with a foreign culture. Phyllis researched and assembled a com-
 pact first aid kit that worked very well for us, and this medicine chest
along with Phyllis’ first aid classes were all the medical skills and sup-
plies we needed.

The kit contained: a tube of Blistex lip balm, a tube of Solban sun
screen lotion, a bottle of moisturizing cream, Calamine lotion, Phisohex
soap, Neosporin anti-bacterial ointment, Betadine solution, hydrogen per-
oxide, small bottle of vinegar, isopropyl alcohol, two packages of univer-
sal antidote mix, a bottle of aspirin, a bottle of tylenol, water purifica-
tion tablets, salt tablets, penicillin pills, Contac anti-histamine,
Lomatil anti-dysentery pills, butterfly and regular adhesive bandages,
sterile compresses, tape, three elastic bandages, three triangular ban-
dages, safety pins, tweezers, needles, sutures size 4-0, cotton swabs,
scissors, nail clippers, thermometer, a snake bite kit with constriction
band, two cold packs, dental floss, matches, razor blades, plastic bags,
a small hand mirror, Pencil and paper, a gallon of fresh clean water, and
a list of everyone’s name, blood type, home phone number and doctor’s
phone number.
It is difficult to capture in words the delicate feelings and subtle deeply perceived emotions which formed a substantial portion of our experiences in Baja California together, but perhaps thru Phyllis' diligent efforts you can catch a glimpse of some of the high quality magical events that happened for us. This is a somewhat edited version of a day by day account of our three month adventure:

PHYLIS' DIARY

Once upon a time, back in the olde days of 1975, five freeks set out on a journey together with the idea of making a dream come true. (And so it begins.....) They headed South into parts unknown equipped most importantly with physical health and a positive, open, enthusiastic willingness to learn. Their objective was to become fully alive.

Adventuring can be a dangerous undertaking. Indeed, they did not return unchanged. You may wonder exactly what happened to this daring quintet during the next three and one half months. None but they will know for sure. I, however, being one of the five, have made some notes on our expedition into the wild pailsley wonder, possibly providing you with a chance to share in some of the fascinating aspects of our incredible world with which we became intricately involved. Fasten your seatbelts 'cause here we go!!!!

Thursday, September 18:

As would be expected in tying the lives of five dynamic individuals together, the melee of completing all activities and shedding the entanglements woven thru the years spent in San Luis Obispo took longer than expected, and it wasn't until four o' clock in the afternoon that we finally got ourselves collected together enuf to actually close the car doors and leave. Yet, we were leaving. It was a definite, concise ending to an era in our lives, a close of a chapter. And in that light, even thru the chaotic arrangement of final details and haphazard packing, the event was perceived as a little sad. We didn't know what was coming, but we were sure of what we were leaving behind. Many wonderful painful struggling growing memories were being sealed in a time capsule of nerve cells, slowly to fade to a serena hue with wrinkles and cracked edges. Such is life, eh?

But life, looking the other direction, is ever new. More than anything else we were taking a step towards the future, and embracing it wholeheartedly. We were looking for change, both inside our heads and out, full of ideas to try living, wondering how different we could make our real world from that of all those other people out there. After all, who really made up the rules anyway? Us, right? Well, then, why not get into it? Why not do it consciously and create for ourselves an environment that was GOOD, WHOLE, GROWTH ORIENTED, BALANCED, THRILLING, all those excellent things? Why not? Here was our chance to prove it could be done and that we liked it. Would it work? Does it matter? All we knew was that we were on our way to something new and exciting, and that was good enough for us. The rest could wait til later.

Right now we had to deal with digesting a Chinese dinner at my parents' house in North Hollywood after our four hour drive, and finding a comfortable spot to sleep on the bed my Dad had mowed for us the previous day - the front lawn.
Friday, September 19:

Madness is the only word to describe Los Angeles. Who could stand to spend their life breathing air conditioned smog while piloting a supervoluptuous four door noisemachine along the sinuous hot oily pathways of an endless concrete jungle at five miles per hour? That question is interesting because the answer is: more than ten million people!!! And the number is not decreasing. What does this say about the values and desires and life goals of these human beings? Perhaps it says more about the skill of social engineers at tailoring the wants of Mr. and Mrs. Public to match the latest in advertised fashion and prestige. If you look at Los Angeles as a problem to solve, it becomes more obvious why God might consider using an earthquake. You can’t even see City Hall, how can you fight it?

Well, so, we did what everybody else seemed to be doing there. Race the rats. Dash here to pick up granola, rush there for our visas, stop at Fedco, go to buy first aid supplies, set back on that slowway and try not to think about the throbbing dull pain inside your head. How can all these people stand it? We’d split up to accomplish our errand, and at long last were finished enuf to meet, up the hill and out of the brown air, at Clint’s parents’ house.

AAAAHHHHHHHHHHH........such pleasure, how relaxing, such relief. The Japanese certainly knew what they were doing when they placed high value in steaming hot baths. A Jacuzzi is about the most wonderful way I know of to unwind. We all stripped off our sweaty clothes and dumped ourselves into the frothing bubbling pool until we were so relaxed we could hardly stand. Then, wham! A feast! Roasted lamb, potatoes, and carrots, fruit salad, fresh whole strawberry pie........shall I continue? Chocolate dream bars, baklava, and on and on and on. What next? Stomach aches. At least five of them. To help take our minds off our aching bulging stomachs, Clint showed his Senior Project physics movie, "THE UNIVERSAL DOORWAY." And then we were off to bed. Didn’t have to move far. Sleeping on the livingroom floor never felt so nice.

Saturday, September 20:

Ahem, to repack! Do you really think we’re going to get all of this food and gear stuffed neatly enuf in these two little vehicles to travel to the southernmost tip of Baja California? Who knows? Let’s just start.

Within a couple hours we’d succeeded, and even had enuf room to carry along just a few extra snacks from that almost overwhelming kitchen of Mrs. Callahan’s. More good-bye’s and we’re again on the road.

This will be our final night, hopefully, spent in the United States for while. I don’t think we noticed. Arriving at John Howell’s house in San Diego, a physics teacher and friend of Clint’s, we set about doing what we were good at. Grubbing. Ed and Al collected a variety of goofies which we whipped up into a delicious pot of spaghetti sauce with artichokes and a peanut butter pie. Perhaps the excitement of what we were embarking on began to sink into our minds. It took several whopping pillow fights to get us to sleep tonight.

Sunday, September 21:

Showers? Don’t get too used to it, folks. This simple luxury, also, will soon be lacking from our daily routine. Did that worry us? No. We crammed five showers into twenty-five minutes and one tank of hot water, snarfed the peanut butter pie for breakfast, and went to awaken my brother Rocky, who was studying business at San Diego State University. We wanted him to accompany us to the border just in case the officials refused to allow us to bring in such things as our bow and arrows.

And now we approach the boundary between the United States of America and Mexico, an imaginary line. The ramped tilting barbed wire fence is only a symbolic divider along a stretch of open land. The stark moral,
ethnic, and economic differences apparent between the two countries are maintained primarily by the agreement of the two peoples that it be so. It is bureaucratic red tape that artificially prevents San Diego and Tijuana from blending into one homogeneous city and culture. And who likes it this way? Who does it benefit? Why, the people holding all those border patrol, customs officials, passport office, tariff regulations and inspector type jobs. And here we are in this no man’s land about to place our fate in the hands of gun toting enforcers of a nebulous, changing and unknowable set of rules. The credo here seems to be, "If you can get away with it and not get caught, then it’s legal." We didn’t want to play this game. The stakes of life and liberty were too high. Besides, all the cards are stacked against us. Clint was the only one with previous experience in Mexico and the stories he told were not very encouraging. We were more than a little nervous.

"Here we go, Rock. If we don’t get stopped, thanks for your assistance."

"Kat, what do you mean you can’t find your visa??"

"We spent all day packing this car like seeds in a sunflower. They just can’t make us tear it apart, can they?"

Coming closer now, closer. Ed’s car: "How far you going, boy?"

"Cabo San Lucas."

"Okay."

Ali’s car...."Okay."

We made it. Whew. That was almost suspiciously too easy. Keep on your toes now. Something might come up yet. Watch out for those Tijuana Taxis. So we weave thru the decidedly different smelling dusty pokey-marked roads south of the border, turning down offers to sell us colorful hand woven blankets, glittering jewelry, saudy plaster cake bull banks, and brilliantly papered pinatas. Street vendors with tacos, "hot dogs," roasted corn on the cob, fresh fruit, and posed photographs on zebra-striped donkeys lined the curbs. This was definitely a new place. But we decided to get quickly away from the inherent craziness of the border town and not stop til we reached at least Ensenada.

Theo and I were less than ten miles (uh, let’s see now, how many kilometers is that?) away from the U.S.A., everything had changed. Even the the feelings in the air were unfamiliar. We became aware of subtle differences all around us, and by constantly observing and investigating EVERY aspect of our new environment we discovered what was to become our highly rewarding secret way to successfully deal with this experience. We accepted everything as it was and strove to learn all we could about it. In this way we could relate to instead of remain strangers from all this newness. You will see we didn’t figure out our mode of operation in an instant. It grew on us, even rather slowly. But watch and you can see that this is where we were headed.

Cruising south along the desolate Pacific coast roadway, we sped around one last hill and came upon the fishing town of Ensenada. As a delectable introduction to Mexican culinary offerings we stopped and sampled fresh raw clams with salsa; and pan dulces, sweet Mexican pastries. I guess that if you must get your stomach accustomed to the local intestinal flora, this is as good a way as any. Better to eat it over with sooner than later, eh?

About fifteen miles below Ensenada is a checkpoint beyond which you cannot go without a valid visa. We all had them and were confident about being permitted....uh, oh. Kat. Where did you say your visa was? She produced it after twenty minutes of scientific digging thru our gear. Up to the window we march to stand nose to nose with a very typical looking Mexican official. Robust, a little greasy.

"How much money you have?"

Pooling all our traveler’s checks and cash it averaged out to about six hundred dollars apiece. "You can only stay here for sixty days. You
must have at least ten dollars per person per day to stay in Mexico. We don’t want any hippies."

"But we need ninety days passes..."

"If you still have money you can get your visas extended later."

"Okay," What else could we say?

We’d decided that we didn’t want to drive at night for several reasons, the primary one being that we had no Mexican insurance for the cars yet and it could be perilous driving down unlit narrow roads trying not to collide with the cows, burros, dogs, pigs, pedestrians, bicyclists, or any of that notorious league of Mexican bus and truck drivers, all of whom are striving to use the thin ribbon of pavement as if it were their own personal hiway. As eight o’clock approached so did sunset and the town of El Rosario. We decided to make camp here for the night, and headed towards the beach.

Bumping down the road we attracted everyone’s attention. The little children had obviously had previous experience interacting with American gringos before. They would run up to the car shouting, "Candy, candy!"

Time to brush up on the old Spanish II lessons from High School. This was something we were going to have to do, too, and the quicker the better. Clint shouted back, "No candy. Es mala para sus dientes." "It’s bad for your teeth." The kids could hardly believe their ears, then started laughing.

Where to sleep? The beach wasn’t appearing for us. If this were the U.S. we would almost certainly be required to find a campground. But this was Mexico so we picked out a dirt parking lot behind a one room schoolhouse. "What do you think, gang? Do we just lay out our bags?"

"Why don’t we post a watch?"

That made us all feel more at ease. There were too many mysterious shadows in our new and unknown environment. We decided to be cautious about their contents. "Ed, you take first watch. Kat can guard from ten to twelve, Clint from twelve to two, Al from two to four, and I’ll take four to six."

Monday, September 22:

"C’mon you guys. It’s six A.M. and the Mexicans have been up for an hour. Let’s hit the road."

We quickly packed our bags and headed out. Simple enuf. Perhaps we thought we had things too well under control, because within fifteen minutes of our departure Lord Murphy made his first appearance in our midst. FSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS...the right rear tire of Ed’s little red half-ton Toyota pick-up went flat.

Okay. So here we are, faced with our first group problem. How do we deal with it? Do we call in the Mexican equivalent of the American Automobile Association? None. Besides the fact that there ain’t none such available, Ed and Al and Clint think we can maintain the self-sufficient, do-it-ourselves attitude fostered during our Thursday Night Meetings by deftly improvising our way out of the situation without any help. Kat and I can think of no reason why not. It should be no problem, especially with a spare car to back us up and the town not far behind us. We’re prepared you know. We’ve got a Jack, a tire iron, a hand pump. What are we waiting for?

Well, even with Clint, our heaviest body, leaning on Kat and Al and bouncing all his weight on the tire iron, it only took us the next two and a half hours to break the bead, wrestle the punctured tire from the rim, and replace it with the spare. We’d never done this before. It took a long time, much energy, and made us hot and dirty, but we succeeded. And with a few exceptions, this became our standard way of approaching problems: let’s brainstorm, "What are all the ways we can deal with this?" and then pick the way that will teach us the most. It wasn’t always easy.
CAR TROUBLES—AGAIN. (AL, ED, KAT, AND PHYLLIS)
CAR TROUBLES—AGAIN. (AL, ED, KAT, AND PHYLLIS)
Somebody up there must have been watching and amused, tho, because we had plenty of opportunities to exercise our skills.

A bakery in Guerrero Negro supplied us with an energy packed snack, then we drove until sunset and pulled off the road. At least it’s not difficult to keep from getting lost here. There’s only one road.

It was wonderful to be living outside again. The sky that evening displayed a show that was so spectacular I don’t think I’ll ever forget it. A violent thunder storm raged out over the Sea of Cortez and tho we could hear nothing, flashes of lightening ripped visibly thru the sunset-inflamed, billowy orange clouds appliqued to a panorama of star-sprinkled, darkening blue velvet. Towering saguaro cactus’ melted to silhouettes as we ate tuna on Mexican rolls and sang to Ed’s suitar. The dramatic appearance of a brilliant full moon climaxed the show and, quite satisfied, we hit the sacks.

Tuesday, September 23:

Up and on the road by six. We stopped near Santa Rosa for a refreshing early morning swim in the Sea, and then on to Mulesea. Once in the town Clint could hardly wait to demonstrate his skills at bargaining profitably with the locals. The area was known for its date production and crates of the sweet brown nuggets lined vendors’ tables. Clint convinced us to stop and wait while he exercised his straight-out-of-the-dictionary-Spanish to dazzle and astound, and perhaps, with just a little help from his wallet, procure a sampling of fruit to take with us. He returned to the car all smiles.

The first few handfuls went down fine. Not bad Callahan. But then someone a little more curious closely examined some of the soft morsels. Why did they seem to be moving around so? YECH! Massots, flies, beetles, an entire entomological zoo was thriving in the sugar rich environment. Yes, we knew it was protein and that the buggies had eaten, and therefore were probably made of nothing more than the dates, but still, we just were not ready for this. We found our appetites suddenly curbed. Some miles down the road the whole bag got tossed out. So much for deals.

An expensive tho tasty breakfast of huevos rancheros added to our feelings of being naively taken by gringo-wise natives, and evening all the banana groves we thought we might be able to recover our losses with one or two armfuls of fresh free fruit. A short hike revealed an abundance of grapefruit, guavas, pomegranates, and mosquitos, but no bananas. Sigh. Let’s move on folks.

The air had gotten quite thick with the heat of the day and the terribly scorched looking rocky brown hills were totally bereft of any vegetation which could give the impression of supplying a spot of shade. Our only relief from the omnipresent oven lay in the sea. So we did. Lie in the sea, that is. Naked, of course. Who knew where our bathing suits were. “Hey, roll on your stomachs. Here comes a car.”

We proceeded thru Loretta. The immensity of the heat seemed to permeate and dehydrate every cell in our bodies, and there was no escape. All windows were wide open as we inchéd our way across this inland pasture using the coastline and water to come quickly. The sparkling blue plain finally came into view. Were we saved? NO. The salty liquid was only slightly cooler than the air. Nothing left to do but keep on driving. What are we setting ourselves into?

As we sat in the stationary vehicles and watched the pavement set pulled towards us and roll by under the wheels, a town appeared in the distance and finally arrived to surround us with its low buildings. Ciudad Constitucion. We exited and went searching for something with which to lubricate our tongues. Sodas again. Heading back towards the cars we were suddenly attacked from the rear, lashed with a violent gust of dusty wind. But the gust didn’t die down, it grew stronger. Hats blew off. We started to run. What’s happening? We dove into our mobile shelters
as big muddy drops began to splatter around us. Wow. A true to life Mexican dust storm, and not a small one at that. Let's keep driving.

After a couple of hours we were able to drive out of the turbulent winds. The sun was setting. Time to find a campsite, eat dinner, and rest our behinds for the night. That's what we thought anyways. I think the bugs had a different idea. They said, "Oh, look. Some nice tasty grinsos for our evening meal. How nice, they're even laying out table cloths from which we can eat them. Hurry children. Don't waste a bite. Just think of all those poor starving mosquitos over in India who have to go to bed hungry tonight."

Needless to say it was a bit difficult to sleep with all these conversations going on. Eddie ended up in the front seat of his truck, and Alberto in his car. The three of us remaining outside must have fed the multitudes, tho we had nothing more than itchy red welts to show for all their gratitude.

Wednesday, September 24:

If you looked at us quickly we might appear to be the same brownish color as the Mexicans around us. The difference is that we're not tanned from the sun but from the dirt.

We are almost to La Paz. Ed's front tire needs changing. It went flat from a slow leak. And we need to extend our visas so we can stay longer than two months. But as we arrive in the city, other things enter our minds. This is La Paz, one of the largest and most active cities in all of Baja California. We've been on the long hot road for a week and could stand a little R and R. What's there to do around here? We tried talking with some of the people we saw, found a good place to drink lemonade and located a hospital thru which we could get the last dose of our typhoid vaccinations. No official was available for us to talk with in the local Oficina de Inmigracion. It was suggested that we solve our problems in San Jose del Cabo.

All that was fine and dandy so we again headed south. On the way we spotted a young boy leading a burro up the road heavily laden with fresh cut palm leaves, presumably to be used for thatching. I thought that with the golden hue of the setting sun he would make a fine photograph. We stopped and tried to communicate with him about our idea, and in the process of setting things up all the palm fronds fell off the donkey. Oh, well. We were pretty flustered, the kid thinking we must all be nuts. We helped to tie on the cargo, and drove to a flat open area to the side of a side road slightly above the highway. Hopefully those hungry insects had not followed us all day or telephoned ahead to warn their relatives.

Five minutes after unrolling our ponchos and sleeping bess a car turned onto our side road, waved to us, and disappeared into the vegetation. Ten minutes later another car followed suit. Then we lost count and the traffic in and out was pretty heavy for awhile. What is this place? Say, do you smell what I smell? Is that? Yes. Marijuana. I hope we live thru the night. We were too tired to move camp, so instead we sang songs while Ed strummed alone. Having already exhausted our repertoire a couple nights before, and not wanting to repeat any, we began making up our own. "The Turkey Blues." "The Ode to the Only Vulture We Ever Saw on the Mexican Hiway." Eventually they got ridiculous snuf that the only way to stop laughing was to go to sleep.

Thursday, September 25:

Well, well. We did survive the night. Round 'em up and head 'em out. Almost before we started we arrived at San Jose del Cabo, the closest recognizable town to our final destination. At this point we decided that the most efficient way for us to accomplish the next few things we needed to do would be for us to split up. Ed, Clint, and I went in the truck to see if we could actually find this piece of land hastily sketched
on our map and if it was really okay for us to stay there for several months. Al and Kat took the Chevy to do some necessary errandings about town. The plan was to meet back in the town square late afternoon.

Our road began well graded and gravel covered, however this didn’t last long. Around two bends and thru the tiny village of Santa Catarina, and we could have been in the uncivilized timeless wilds of Baja California. It was incredible. This was a desert by every definition to which we were accustomed, yet the animal life was abundant: roadrunners, hawks, giant lizards, rodents, bugs, cows, burros, chickens, pigs, turkeys, horses, snakes, butterflies, doves, and all these visible from the road.

We began to feel a little like Alice in Wonderland, lost in a world where what should have been common insisted on being unexpectedly new. If this was a desert, which it looked like from a distance and which it felt like from the hot dry air, then why did the imposing vegetation that surrounded us for miles appear to be a dense impassable jungle? Like Alice we were going to have to change our minds about a lot of things that seemed odd and new to us. These tree bushes, none of which we had names for or could recognize except the towering saguaro — which wasn’t even the correct name for it in these parts — comprised the local form of a forest. No pines, no oaks or sycamores here, yet this was indeed a forest, so we changed our definition and awareness of what a forest was.

But we still aren’t there yet. Each hovel or settlement we pass is another opportunity we can’t resist in our attempt to discover how lost we are. Clint’s dictionary is just beginning to show the first signs of wear as he flips thru the pages trying to piece together whatever clues he can from the explicit directions rapidly spoken by the rancher folks he talks with. We generally gather that our destination is still further north.

The narrow dirt road is setting narrower. Up steep inclines, down steeper ones. Drive around a blind curve and come face to face with a huge black bull calmly chewing his cud, who happens to enjoy standing exactly where he is and can see no reason to move. Who are we to argue with those horns? Patience, children.

Sometimes the ruts in the road are so deep and so wide we can hardly believe we are on a road. You can just feel the steel suspension and steering mechanisms straining under the stresses of lifting the full load up and over each bump. Would they last out the ride? Would we? It’s pretty stressful for the human element here too. Ed’s hands are sweating and his arms ache. One false move and we’re stuck out here with a snapped axle or a crushed king pin. It seems to take forever.

There are two schools of thought concerning the navigation of such a passage. One idea is that if you creep along at a snail’s pace the forces won’t be so great on the vehicle’s components and you might complete your journey intact. The opposing concept is that if you scream down the old road as fast as you can then you only hit the tops of the bumps and don’t have to worry so much about maneuvering around the open pits. Ed tended towards the latter, Clint and I towards the former. We proved to be quite outspoken backseat drivers. Every other sentence came out, “Hey, Ed. We’re in no hurry. Take it slowly why don’t you?” And he would — for a while. Till it got dull. Then the bouncing speedometer would inch its way up to a discernable velocity. After Clint bashed his head on the cab ceiling a few times, and I lost my grip on the dash board and began flail wildly about, we’d have to give him another gentle hint: “TAKE IT SLOW!!!”

The land is peaceful and gorgeous. The rolling sparkly waves massaging the now visible shoreline remind me of the beginnings of the television show Hawaii 5-0. And, look! There! The fig tree! Just like on our map. We roll into the luxurious shade of this massive plant and are greeted by one Abel Olachea, the owner of the thatched roof stone house and surrounding ranch. “Ah, you are friends of Susan Wellbanks? Then my house is your house!” The open, friendly hospitality almost overwhemls us, even if the words are all in Spanish.
Clint was not known to drink beer, but after our arduous, hot ride he
doesn’t hesitate an instant to accept the ice cold can of Tecate which
Abel offers to each of us. We converse somewhat haltingly for half an
hour or so, trying to explain what we’re about and asking Abel for any
advice he could give us. Eddie, not knowing a word of this new language
yet, just nods and smiles friendly-like whenever we turn to him. We laugh
a lot. We ask if it’s okay to unload our truckfull of gear for a day or
so while we finish arrangements in town and drive the other car out. Abel
says it’s even alright for us to store our vehicles within the confines of
his fenced-in front yard during our stay. We thank him profusely and set
about our task. The drive out in the near empty truck is a tad easier.
Kat and Al are easy to locate in the town square of San Jose; they’re
syringes. They had been unable to discover any brown rice or wholewheat
flour anywhere so we had to make do with what was available, the white
varieties. Together we devoured a scrumptious lunch with banana splits for
desert, and set off for the beach for the night.

Some Americans who had spent time on this beach before informed us
that if we were gone by six the next morning, we wouldn’t have to give mo-
ney to Francisco who liked to make the syringes pay for their night’s stay.
That sounded fine by us. Not even the local teenagers who arrived late at
night and who played the radio, drank beer, talked and laughed loudly un-
til later were able to keep us from sawing logs. It had been a busy day.

Friday, September 26;

Gone with the sun. We drove a little ways back towards San Jose del
Cabo and stopped to go for a swim. A Japanese freighter had wrecked on
the rocks there and the rusting old hull provided a home for many a rock
crab (Pachygrapsus crassipes) and a jungle gym for us. This was when I
first began to feel wiped out. Weakness, the runs; and as we drove in to-
wards town, I proceeded to vomit. No one else is sick. Why me?? Ahhh,
could it have been that fruit I tasted yesterday on our way to Abel’s
ranch? Clint tried it too, but apparently didn’t really put any in his
mouth. We discussed the possibilities and came to a consensus. I had
eaten one drop of juice from a poisonous fruit. Ohhhh.....time to puke
again.

San Jose’s town square offered shady benches where we spent the morn-
ing writing letters and slurping five popsicles each. Mine didn’t stay in
my stomach long. Remind me to stick to apples, oranges, and bananas from
now on. Better yet, let’s just not talk about food.

We decided to split up once more. This time Ed and Clint would take
the truck back up to La Paz, loaded with the heavy gear from the towriding
Chevy, and purchase Mexican automobile insurance which we weren’t able to
obtain locally, while I would guide Kat and Al out to Abel’s and choose a
campsite along the beach. After a brief but refreshing waterfight, we de-
parted.

Most cars are designed strictly for use on flat, paved highways. Our
little Nova II is one of those. Driving thru gorges, gullies, sliding
chasms and grasping cactus was straining our ground transporter beyond all
reasonable limits. We began to feel at ease when, because of luck and
Al’s careful driving, we’d come to within five miles of the coast and had
only to dig ourselves out of one sand trap. Maybe we’d make it.

Guess again. Without warning our trusty machine ground out a most
displeasing KERPLUNKETY-PLUNKETY-PLUNK-PLUNK-CRANK-AHHWWW-PHOOOM, and then
lurched to a stop and died. Ahem. Alright all you ace car mechanics.
What made it do that? To Al it sounded too much like a thrown crankshaft
or broken connecting rod to do much experimenting. So what do we do now?
I know what I felt like doing, so I went into the bushes and did it. We
pushed the car to the side of the road and began to wait.

The heat was intense; the flies were immense. Al had made a cactus
pin cushion out of his leg. I had a fever, felt sicker than sick, and
wanted to do nothing other than lay there and sleep. Who could say where the nearest help was. We were short on supplies and Kat and Al had to make do with eating canned tuna and broth for dinner. We sprawled uncomfortably on the car seats to try to get some sleep. Where were Ed and Clint?

Well, now, Ed and Clint were relaxing elegantly in a schnitzel restaurant dining on juicy, tender chicken with a cool crisp salad, sodas and ice cream. Boy, would they have gotten yelled at if we had only known.

Sometimes during the night a lone bovine trods lazily along his usual path homeward. Being that his road is partially blocked by an unfamiliar object he decides, not having to go too far out of his way, mind you, to investigate. Minimally. The nose works well enuf. And here’s an interesting place to probe. Provocative odors. The nose contacts a warm soft smelly thing—O! Frightening! And he runs off into the dark.

Saturday, September 27:
Kat wakes up early and discovers she has a wet, slightly sticky bare foot.

I feel much better. Al has dug most of the prickles out of his calf. We try to work on the car, but don’t get anywhere. The heat builds and pestiferous flies arrive in hordes. Finally we can’t stand it anymore and decide to hike to the ocean. Anything’s better than waiting around like baked bug bait. We thought. How hot can it get? How hot can it get before it’s too hot for us to survive a five mile hike without much water? I guess we’d soon see.

It was a long, sweaty haul, but never fear, we did make it. Literally falling into the cool ocean revived us enuf to stumble over to that luscious fig tree and fall asleep for two hours in its soothing shade. I was still weak from the poison fruit and the rest did me good.

Let’s go find home. Heading out across the soft sand we were halfway to the first point when a familiar whistle caught our attention. I whirléd around to find Clint and Ed striding easily across the dunes in our direction. They’d found us! We were saved!

After swapping tales, we continued scouting out the best place to set up camp. One to two hundred feet of course white sand with occasional piles of boulders wore a sinewy strip separating sea from vegetation. We explored this path around a couple points and coves before arriving at the most ideal spot. Up a slight rise, panoramic view, open enuf to catch a cooling, insect removing breeze, but hidden enuf to be almost undetectable until within a hundred feet, we were completely isolated from civilization and the known world. A good place to begin our experiment. This was our new home. The only task remaining was to transport all of our equipment and supplies across a kilometer of soft beach sand.

It’s late afternoon, but there’s no time to start better than right now. Back to the fig tree for our first load. We set up a water hole shade shelter on driftwood posts about halfway. Worked until midnight and Al actually fell asleep in his tracks, an armload of gear for a pillow. Kat found a sleeping bag, while Ed, Clint, and I stretched out on cots and draped a canvas tarpaulin over ourselves for a blanket. It didn’t work very well. As our bodies cooled off the sweat soaked clothes we wore kept us shivering til sun rise, at which time it didn’t matter anymore because we started sweating again.

Sunday, September 28:
Tote that barge! Lift that bail! A mighty heave-ho and away we go! Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of... Tequila? Well, you get the idea. We were working very hard and trying to make the best of it. Each of our twenty-one cantaloupe crates weighed in at around sixty-five pounds. Then there all of the tightly packed five-gallon pickle buckets, six fifty-pound water containers, stoves, cots, tent, six gallons of white gas, a one hun-
dred pound sack of flour, etc., etc., etc. If we wanted it with us we had to carry it for a half mile over soft sand. The job wouldn’t have been so oppressive if it weren’t for the incredible heat. It suddenly became obvious as to why it was customary for Mexican people to cease all activity and rest—sombrero pulled low over the head, sitting propped against a saguaro cactus—thru the midday sun; it was loco to do otherwise. We quickly adopted the habit ourselves.

Our camp is slowly beginning to become more than a sand dune. At least the piles of paraphernalia are becoming complete enuf that we can sleep in reasonable comfort in camp. Which we did. As soon as we lay down. Except for Clint. For some reason he made several trips into the bushes during the night.

Monday, September 29:

Ahhhhh, yes. Aching muscles. Walking on sand carrying sixty extra pounds day after day does amazing things to your calves, and shoulders, and back, and arms.

During one of our siestas Al had a brainstorm. "There must be an easier way to do this. Yes. Why don’t we plank the truck along the beach?"

"What?"

"You know, get some boards and put them under the wheels, drive slowly and carefully, and move the whole load at once. I bet we could set at least half way to camp before the rocks stopped us. What do you think?"

"Sure! Why not?"

So we borrowed some rather long but sturdy two-by-eights from Abel, unloaded by the side of the road Al’s tool box and all extraneous baggage which we didn’t need to move to camp, and tried a few lengths. It goes okay. Clint stands out in front of the truck and gives steering directions by finger code while Ed eases the truck full length onto a set of planks. The four of us outside the vehicle quickly drag the freed rear boards forward and carefully line them up with the front tires, measuring to be certain that the spacing is correct, and then Ed drives ahead again onto the new planks. All afternoon we concentrated intensely on this job. And just as we approached the rocky barrier all four wheels slid completely off their narrow supports and got good and stuck. What do you say we quit here for the day?

We unloaded the truck and prepared a nice warm dinner. We’re handling all this hard work pretty well, except for Clint. He’s had the hee-bee-seebees all day and must have gone up the hill six times while we were planking. And so it goes.

Tuesday, September 30:

Moved crates again this morning while it was still cool. Sour dough pancakes for breakfast and, after ten sweaty hard working days, we figured it was about time to take our first showers. How do you take a shower on the beach without a drop of fresh water? Why, you make a deal. You unwrap a bar of Army surplus saltwater soap, take all your clothes off, dunk in the waves, come out and lather up. Then you find someone who’s willing to trade carrying three or four tubfuls of rinsewater up and dump them over your head for the same favor in return. We didn’t want to pollute the ocean with our detergents so always washed ourselves and our belongings inland.

"Say," Ed says, "while we’re at it, how about haircuts? It sure is hot with this stringy mess on my head."

Having had some experience in the shearing business, I volunteered my services. Free of charge, of course, but no guarantees. "Okay, Ed, you’re first. Off with your hair, boy." And all his big brown curls floated gently to the sand. I chopped at least five inches off of Kat’s hair and lowered Clint’s ears a good bit. Me? No, maybe later,
Kat and I set up the blue and yellow plastic tarp on driftwood poles which were anchored down with guy lines tied around good sized rocks and buried in the sand. This is our main shade shelter. Under it we place our sleeping gear and our one allotted crate of personal possessions. It may be slightly Spartan, but it’s home.

Then this afternoon Clint and I took our first exploratory skin dive into the watery wonderland of our front yard. Beautiful. The bottom, remaining shallow pretty far out, was bereft of seaweed and covered with rocks and patches of sand. Colorful tropical fish of untold varieties swam about us unafraid in sparkling water that was plenty warm enuf to play in for hours without need of a wetsuit. I can tell we have much to explore here. What a delightful place to be, and it’s all ours for free! We saw a halibut, a huge fish with a yellow fin, and schools of flat rock eaters. I wonder if any of them taste good.

We’ve decided to place four illegal cuss words in our undictionary. These words are being overused around here and add nothing but confusion and frustration to our communications because of their lack of clarity yet tremendous applicability. The words are: THINGO, PLACE, STUFF, and IT.

"It’s the same thing as that stuff we set at the place, remember?"

"No. What do you mean? What are you saying?"

We concluded that it was okay not to talk so quickly if you took the time to clarify your thoughts and recall precise words from memory to aid your communication. Just talking about talking and trying to identify the roots of some of our problems helped tremendously to make us more aware of and able to change poor communication habits. This was one of the first of our homemade rules, and it was a good one.

Wednesday, October 1:

Most of us are quite ready to begin setting involved in a routine of regularly scheduled self-taught classes, however we’re seemingly forever halted from progressing in that direction by an endless stream of minor Murphy messes. We’ve given up pre-planning days in advance and simply work at what needs to be done. Tonight we hope to finally finish hauling the last of our belongings to camp. Eddie’s truck is still stuck in the sand down the beach, and Al’s is disabled a few miles up the road. We’ll just keep dealing with these problems one at a time, and one day soon maybe we can sit down and read a book.

We are all setting tanned from the sun and sea air, strong from constant exercise, and at least partially accustomed to the conditions in our new environment. The trouble is that all the local creatures have had a much longer time to adapt. The ants here bite hard. I don’t think there is much meat available and they want to make their only chance to grab a mouthful count. The flies are numerous, but inexperienced at dodging swats. You can get them in one try, but have to slap twice as hard to do any damage, and guess who’s on the other side of the fly.

Water to us is the source of life itself. Each cool sip is an almost overwhelming pleasure, and even after the sun’s rays have raised the clear liquid’s temperature nearly to scalding, we drink it without hesitation. One gallon per person each day is required to quench our thirst while we’re working in this heat. Rationing water would lead to rapid dehydration, so we don’t limit our intake. We’re just very careful not to use this precious resource for anything that doesn’t go down our throats.

"Ahhhh, it’s getting cooler now that the sun is down. Finish eating your baked beans and sour dough bread, and let’s complete this hauling job. It’s about time we moved on to something more interesting."

A bright moon lit our path late into the night and we didn’t stop till we’d finished.
Thursday, October 2:

We awoke later than usual: 6:30 instead of 5:45. After a hearty meal of oatmeal and brown sugar—yum!—we headed off down the beach. Today's task was to dig out the little red truck and get it back to hard ground where it belonged. Once we had her back on the planks and turned around one-hundred and eighty degrees the long stretch of beach loomed ahead of us. "We're almost down to hard sand here. I bet if we waited just a little longer till it was low tide we could make a run for it and not spend so much time trotting boards around. What do you think?"

We decided to try it, and after working hard in the hot sun it was not too difficult to be convinced to take a nap. We'd made only one slight miscalculation, however. The tide was already low. We were rudely startled out of a peaceful rest by the threatening sound of a large wave crashing maliciously about the truck's wheels. WHAT? What's going on? All hands on deck!! As quickly as the five of us could pile up a protective sand wall the waves would wash it away. Planks were wet and tires refused to stay on the sand coated surfaces even if we could prevent them from floating away with the tide. This was an emergency.

Here we are battling the unforgiving sea on a lonely beach in a foreign country with no one and no equipment around to help us. A disaster! Had we made a fatal mistake? Would we be able to save the truck, our sole means of transportation?

Well, you can bet we didn't stand around and think about it. We jumped into the chaos head over heels, scraped sand off the boards, rescued an empty water bottle floating out to sea, and leveled out a pathway as fast as we could for our instant road. We'd had plenty of practice planking, but before being stimulated with this kind of motivation we'd never moved so fast.

Hardly a word was spoken. It was over in less than ten minutes. We won. This round, anyway. Barely. Looking behind us we watched the foamy brine completely inundate the spot our vehicle had occupied a scant few minutes before. Whew! We could almost hear the water chuckling: "And let that be a lesson to any of you who would consider thinking that life here is too easy and dare to slack your attention. Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!"

So it was back to planking. "Boy is this dull."

"I'll say. And is it ever hot."

"Hey, listen. Don't you think that if we gave it just one more try we could drive her along the sand without planks? This slow moving is for the worms. The truck is empty and light, and we could push it in case the wheels started to spin...."

"Okay, okay."

Did it work? No. But it was a gallant try. We planked on and on and on, and finally achieved the road at dusk, marked the truck under the firs tree, and trod irregularly back to camp for a dinner of rewarmed beans, bread and water. It could have been anything edible, for we were all exhausted and fell soundly asleep upon swallowing the last mouthful.

And we slept without the knowledge that a lone Mexican rancher had observed our activities thruout the day and, with his family, was soon to become a player in our theater by the sea.

Friday, October 3:

I woke up with a start and barely made it over the hill before answering the call of nature. Then cooked up a big batch of hominy grits for breakfast. The rest of the day I spent setting up the green canvas tent, moving the kitchen with Kat's help, and reorganizing it all. Now everything's got its neat little place on the shelves made by empty crates turned sideways. A sheet of plywood makes a great counter top, and with the Coleman stove and collapsable oven we've all the conveniences of home, almost.
After eating, Al and Ed set off to fix Al's car, and Clint walked with them to bring back a water bottle. I wasn't really paying much attention but all of a sudden I realized it was four o'clock and Clint had not returned. Kat and I talked it over and decided that she would stay here to guard camp while I set off with my binoculars and knife on a reconnoissance mission. What had happened?

I followed three pairs of footprints all the way to the last bend, and around it to find three familiar but very sullen looking men just sitting in the sand by the Toyota, right where we had left it parked.

"What's wrong?"

"Remember that pile of gear we'd left here a couple days ago so we wouldn't have to cart it up the beach and back? Well, it's gone. But that's not all. If it had simply been stolen that would have been understandable. I mean we even had a bag of clothes we were going to pass out to any locals who could use them, and Al's tools were valuable. The scary part is this."

A chill ran up my spine as Clint held out a fistful of torn pages from Al's rare edition of a car maintenance and repair manual.

"What they didn't take, they wantonly destroyed and scattered around in the brush. Not a very pleasant omen, I'd say."

As we sat in disturbed silence, an old battered green stake bed truck came rumbling down the road. For no other reason than that we were feeling angry and abused, we stepped out into the road and waved it to a halt.

"Hello. Do you speak English?" Clint asked. Two or three Mexican rancher types and a blond haired male our age occupied the cab or were standing in the back of the truck.

"I do," said the fairskinned one. "What do you want?"

"Say, don't I know you from somewhere?" Clint asked, a bit skeptically.

"My name is Bruce Varney."

"Of course, you went to Malaga Cove Junior High with me, remember."

A place to meet someone you know! And what timing. "Look, we've just had a whole pile of equipment and supplies stolen. Do you know anything about it?"

"Are you the owner of these?" He held out a pad of several hundred dollars worth of Al's traveler's checks. Were we suspicious? You can bet your last banana we were. "The driver found these on the road yesterday. We were going to turn them in to the police when we went to town today. Here." He handed them to us.

Sometimes things happen real fast around here.

"It probably isn't a good idea to leave your belongings unguarded by the side of the road out here, especially for a few days. Sometimes the ranch hands will drink a little tequila and you can't always tell what will happen. Usually they are very good people."

It was our fault, of course. Probably pretty stupid of us. Wouldn't the same or worse have happened in the United States?

"Say, you seem to know your way around these parts pretty well. Would you mind talking with us for a couple minutes. We've got a broken car up the road a bit . . ."

"You mean the little Chevy?"

News travels fast, too.

"Uh, yes."

"You ought to move it out of the road," Bruce said, as if this treacherous path were some kind of hiway. "It's closest to Don Alberto's ranch. Follow us and we'll give you a tow there."

Our heads were spinning. What next? The twists of fate were throwing us this way and that without consideration. It was fairly obvious that we were not the least bit in control of this situation. What should we do? Ride it out, children. Take it as it comes.
So we met Don Alberto, a fairly formal but friendly old gentleman, somewhat like a grandfather. We didn't know it then, but we'd see much more of him too. He allowed us to park the car safely within his fence. We drove back to the fig tree and walked back to camp still pondering all that had happened.

Saturday, October 4:

Up by five-thirty. Four of us were off to meet Bruce at Boca de los Vinoramas, the house he was living in and watching for the owners. He'd promised to show us a shortcut to La Paz. We left Clint to watch camp with less than a gallon of drinking water to last him till our return. Hopefully we wouldn't be too long.

Bruce had already departed by the time we arrived, so we ventured out unsuited. The dirt road was relatively well kept and went its way beauti- along the coast. Magnificent ranchos added to the scenery. It might have been an entirely pleasant ride except that just before entering La Paz our little pick-up began roaring like a motor boat. Ah yes. Machines.

We parked in town under a nice shade tree, and while Ed and Al figured out how to refasten the exhaust pipe to the manifold, Kat and I went shopping for supplies. These of course included a couple of Vitas and freshly squeezed lemon juices with ice. It was hot, you know. And almost every store and restaurant was closed for siesta time from one to three o'clock. We had no choice but to take it easy.

Finally we completed our errands, grabbed some icy cream, did the laundry, and obtained from the purification plant nine bottles, two slurry containers, and one pickle bucket full of water, about sixty-two gallons. The sun set as we headed home. After driving down a dark dirt road for quite awhile, Ed, the pilot, spoke up thusly, "Phyllis, this doesn't look very familiar...."

"Oh, Ed. That's because it's dark. Just keep going."

However, two minutes after that I changed my mind. We backtracked for awhile. It's about nine P.M. now. We're barrelin' along the bumpy dirt road and half way up this horrendous hill the engine stalls. Back down carefully for another try. Rrrmmmm-rrrmmmm-come-on-baby-uuhhhhh- rhtouey. Nore. We thought it could. It thought differently. The three passengers hopped out, then, and for the third try cheered and pushed the truck up the hill and she made it. But then we noticed the tire had gone flat again from the slow leak. No problem. Get out the bicycle pump and reinflate it. And then, just as we were finished, the headlamps died.

Oh, brother! This was getting to be too much. There aren't any street-lamps on the cactus' here, so if we were to set anywhere, we had to make them work again. So for the next hour and a half Al studied the schematic and fiddled around in the dark. Ed went to sleep. Kat and I waited. It's a good thing Al was used to functioning late at night. The rest of us were pretty pooped. And he succeeded! He'd cut the radio wire and ran it from a spark plug, outside of the hood, thru the window and hooked it to the back side of the ignition switch. Starting the engine switched the lights on. Absolutely amazing! And boy, we were tired.

"Ready to get out of here? Oh, no! The tire's flat again!"

Al slept on his haunches while Ed, Kat and I did a whiz-bang tire change. And by one in the morning we were safely parked under the fig tree, had grabbed two gallons of water, and began the hike to camp.

If we all sleep the way Clint does, it's not going to be too difficult for the Frito Bandito to sneak into camp and make off with the good- ies unapprehended. I wanted to let him know it was us arriving in the night, so whistled and yelled from a distance. Then after tripping over the guy line, I bent down to find he was still sleeping like a log. Hmm.

"Clinton," I whispered, "we brought you some water." Poof, he was awake. I had found the magic words. In trade he fed us some home made date bread, and tucked us all into bed. What a day,
Sunday, October 5:

"Food," Clint said softly. It was enuf to wake us all and drag us out to the kitchen, where we devoured last night's dinner of TVP ham loaf, mashed potatoes, and gravy. Tasty, but a bit heavy for six thirty in the morning.

We spent the early hours continuing to set up camp, setting our personal gear organized. We even decided to dismantle, reposition closer to the kitchen, and re-erect our shade shelter, as if we needed more work to do.

"What? Are we done? You don't mean it do you? Are you saying we have finally moved all our possessions into camp and set up everything to the extent that we can maybe relax a little and think of something else to do? Maybe even read a book?" We were just about ready to shout a big Hurrah! when Ed quietly observed that we were completely out of water and that it was low tide, the ideal time to tote bottles along the beach. Ah, well. We knew it was too good to be true.

Back at the fig tree, Abel and his ranch hands cheered us on from a slightly inebriated state. We weren't sure exactly how to handle this so mostly stayed out of their way and smiled. Within a couple of hours we had completed our task, and flopped down on our beds to relax in the slightly cooler shade.

"Hey, what's this?" Kat asked as she held up a small brown paper bag carefully packed with fifteen fresh chicken eggs. "Where did these come from?" We began to look around for clues. Ah-hah! Footprints. The footgear of the natives here is usually comprised of some kind of sandal fabricated from strips of leather and old automobile tires. Two pairs of such tracks, one large and one small, led into and out of our camp. Who could this be? Maybe the local folks aren't so bad after all.

Finally Ed spoke up. It turned out that on one of our loading trips several days ago, Ed had had a conversation with a thin Mexican rancher type who had stepped out of bushes near our beach. Knowing very little Spanish, Ed had embarrassingly done his best, being friendly, saying "Si." The net result must be these eggs. Not bad Ed. However, we began to wonder exactly what else he'd agreed to.

After hiking a few miles in the heat with fifty pound loads on our shoulders, the rolling blue waves began to look rather tempting. Even tho the tide was coming in rough and murky, Clint and I decided to see if we could catch some dinner. We couldn't. There were plenty of fishes, but we got thrown around so much that we thought we'd try again tomorrow at low tide. Something to look forward to.

Monday, October 6:

As much as I wished to stay in bed this morning I decided I'd treat everybody to a hot breakfast of hashed brown potatoes and a raisin omelette made with our farm fresh eggs. According to the chart I just put up it was my turn to cook.

After some discussion and even more experimenting we've developed a schedule of rotated duties that we think will keep us well fed and happy. An entire cycle of chores takes up two five-day "weeks." During that time an individual will have cooked and cleaned up two dinners, one breakfast, and one batch of breadstuff. This gives us a hot meal every night and one every other morning alternating with fresh baked bread. We figured we could fend for ourselves for lunches and every second breakfast, and if we had to improvise or scrounge a little, then at least we wouldn't waste leftovers. This plan works excellently for us.

The mysterious egg man walked into our camp today. Tall, thin, dark, weathered, a straw cowboy hat shading a broad smile accented by white buck teeth. We all gathered round to interrogate this our first official visitor. His name is Fernando. He lives with his wife Adelfa and two children, Fernando Jr., (Oh-ho! That's where the smaller set of footprints came
from.) and Vira Cruz, about three kilometers south of us along the beach
at a place called Rancho San Luis. Fernando doesn’t own the ranch, just
takes care of the cattle, for which he is paid the equivalent of ninety
dollars a month and whatever he can get for the cheese he and Adelfa make
from the milk they collect. He was very patient with us trying to trans-
late all that he said.

Fernando thought that Ed or someone was going to drop by the ranch to
pick up the eggs. When we didn’t show he figured he’d just bring some
over. It seems we’re a bit of a curiosity for the locals here and Fernan-
do has decided to try a little direct investigating under the guise of
doing business. Fresh gossip, you know. We paid him a peso (eight cents)
an egg, a fair price to us and I’m sure a deal for him, and on top of that
I got invited to come over for a visit and pick up more huevos on Thursday.
Now that sounds like it could be interesting.

Al finished the toilet! This morning he jumped out of bed and with-
out noticeable provocation dug a beautiful deep shmek pit. By mounting
our pearly yellow plastic seat on one of the wooden cantaloupe crates,
balancing this framework on driftwood boards directly above the chasm, and
sliding a roll of tissues over the end of a stick stuck in the sand near-
by, he has created one of the most popular rest spots in our camp. What a
hero. This afternoon we all tried it out for size, and took photographs
of our ribbon (?) cutting ceremony. Such fun.

School started today! Yes, we really are excited. It seems like
it’s been ages since we got to sit down and read a book, or write, or
study. Not to say we haven’t been learning valuable things. But before
we departed the States we each developed a personal curriculum for our-
selves, lists of projects to work on, and these were a main motivating
force behind our comings to Mexico. Now here we were going on three weeks
and we had yet to hold a class. So it was with great enthusiasm that we
spent two hours this morning and two hours this afternoon at Clint’s and
Kat’s direction experiencing Silva Mind Control philosophies and techni-
ques. During break Al shared with us some observations he’d made about us
interacting with our physical surroundings. “Look at our camp,” he said.
“Notice anything? See how our shelters and table are situated? In this
totally non-linear, organic, natural environment of ours we’ve erected all
of our structures so that their edges are either parallel or perpendicular
to each other.] What do you think about that?”

Well, we did think about it, and such awarenesses are truly enlight-
ening. We agreed to add the responsibility of sponsoring an Awareness
Hour to our charted duties. Every other day, the person who bakes bread
must also generate an activity or thought in which we can all participate
with the idea of promoting our personal wholeness. This new event could
prove to be quite fun.

At low tide Clint and I set out once again to hunt us up some fishes
for dinner. This time we succeeded. Clint speared a good sized critter
and I caught the thrashing ball of fins and scales in our goodie bag. I
thought it went pretty smoothly, but Clint looked a little out of breath
and worried as we climbed up onto the beach. “What’s wrong?” I asked,
puzzled.

“Uh, well,” he mumbled a little indistinctly. “I speared the fish,
you see, and just as we were getting him into the net I happened to glance
at the rocks below us.”

“Go on,” I prompted.

After a deep breath or two Clint said, “Well, right under our feet
was this five foot long shark and there wasn’t anything we could really do
about it except swim to shore, which is just what we were doing. So while
you swam ahead I guarded our retreat, and I guess he didn’t even wake up.
Which is fine with me. Boy, that was exciting enuf to make my knees
shake,”
I guess I might have been a little more upset had I seen this infamous animal myself, but as it was I contentedly gutted our catch and greatly enjoyed eating something other than Textured Vegetable Protein for dinner.

Tuesday, October 7:

As of today, Clint has had the "turistas" for six days running (Get it?), Al has been manufacturing a continuous supply of the most obnoxious natural sasses my nose has ever tried not to inhale, Kat wears the least amount of clothes, and Ed’s hands are covered with blisters from shoveling sand. What about me, you ask? Oh, I’m innocent.

Things are shaping up rather nicely around here. For the last few days we have been working on digging out a new shade shelter. Ed designed it and excavated most of it himself, and I must say it’s very comfortable. Two army surplus ponchos are tied end to end and supported overhead with the usual driftwood poles and ropes tied to rocks in the sand. You can lean back on the slanting walls protected from the sun and read or play guitar with a cool breeze wiping the sweat off your brow.

With the completion of this study hall we have all we could ask for. Camp consists of our kitchen with two burner white gas stove, bottled water, food stashed neatly away in plastic containers, a double-mantled lantern, plenty of pickle buckets to sit or lean on, and a posted duty roster. A hundred fifty feet east is a broad horizon of smooth blue saltwater bordered by roaring white foamy waves over which we watch the sun appear every morning, and twenty feet northwest, nestled against a steep sand dune which rises fifty feet to the edge of the desert jungle, is our nine by nine foot green canvas tent: library and delicate-belongsins storage area. One hundred fifty feet south of the kitchen, following the well beaten path, you will find our commode. The magnificent view more than makes up for any modern conveniences it lacks. Our bedroom shade shelter with cots, sleeping bags, and cantaloupe crate clothes cabinets lies about thirty feet north of the dining area, and is also equipped with a lantern. And about sixty feet further north sits our newly finished study hall. (Next tour in forty-five minutes. Please line up behind the rope. No flash photographs are allowed.....)

We are attempting here in our grand experiment to integrate new and interesting learnings as an everyday feature of our way of life. The awarenessness comes fast and furious around here even if the situation we live in is rather typical for living close to the Earth. I want to quote from a letter I just wrote to give you an idea of what our daily routine entails.

"This is the way I enjoy living most I think. I’m out of doors every minute, sleeping with the stars for a blanket each night. I skin dive in the emerald waters of my front yard regularly and feast on the fish I catch. I feel connected to my environment here, because if I cease to be intricately involved in the strenuous activities which maintain our life support systems then this outpost we’ve built crumbles, and I with it. I am bereft of the common luxuries of the twentieth century. We do not even have a radio with us. But I have my knife and a few particles of clothing, a new culture to study, new insects to observe, and today school starts. Our school, where I will be able to learn some of the things I really want to learn. And each day I am challenged to use every ounce of my wits by problems that leap out of the chaos and try to wipe us out. But we learn to function as a team and keep outwitting the odds with intelligence. Just living here is a good test in survival. Is it difficult? Perhaps. But I LOVE it. I’m alive!

"Lest you get the idea that this manner of living is comfortable and dreamy, let me give you some examples of the conditions we must learn to enjoy or, at least, accept with a positive, adventurous attitude. When sleeping under the Milky Way I am also sleeping with cold hard sand, ants,
and mice. It is unavoidable. Such creatures have as much right to this planet as I do. I haven't brushed my hair in days because I can't set a brush thru it. Complements of the wind and sea and sun. I cannot use our precious fresh water for anything but drinking so my skin and hair and teeth are constantly bathed in salt. The heat is intense, and there is no shade here but what we have manufactured. Trees are as uncommon as wells in this desert. We have all had to convince ourselves that hard labor is a pleasure, because some of the tasks we have to deal with demand tremendous physical effort. Clothes, when we wear them, quickly acquire a greasy odorous coating, but washing garments in saltwater makes them fall apart, and washing ourselves is not always pleasant in chilly water with a sand coated scratchy bar of soap which refuses to lather. Our toilet is in plain view of the kitchen, yet my survival often depends on my ability to get along with and live intimately among these four other human beings.

"All these things plus more affect the way we live here, but the hardships incurred mean very little to all of us compared to the knowledge we are gaining by coping with our situation. We think very little about them. In fact in this letter is the first time I really considered what we are going thru. Mostly we are having the time of our lives. I just wanted to put some reality into the dreamy image I've been painting for you."

I held the initial session of my first aid class. Everyone did artificial resuscitation on me for practice. I want to make sure that if it's me who needs help that I can count on the rest of the gang to be well versed in what to do. The life I save could be my own. Then afterwards we each collected ten stones from up and down the beach. They're hard to come by and we need them for our various construction projects.

Clint did awareness exercises of knife throwing, and running while thinking down then diving in the air and doing a roll. It was fun. And now I have a few more things to practice. As I was walking back to camp splashing in the waves a lone Mexican popped around the bend. I threw on some clothes, strapped on my knife, strolled on over and had a nice chat. He was collecting sea snails to take back to his ranch, the other side of Rancho San Luis. He was also, no doubt, checking out his rumor of a squad of grinuos camped out along the beach. Si, senor. You can bet your best tortilla that we are really here.

Two nights a week we are reading aloud as a group from "The Prince and the Pauper," in Spanish. Memorizing words is pretty simple; it's much easier to remember them than to look them up in the dictionary every time you want to say something. However, figuring out all the irregular conjugations of verbs is a little more complicated.

It's after dark, the lantern is quietly hissing an accompaniment to the rhythmic rush of the waves and our silent reading or writing. Then all of a sudden OOOOOOOOOOOOmmm-CLONK-PLOP. It's Barney! Almost every evening we're visited by this misanthropic kamikaze beetle. He awkwardly squirms around on the sand til he can flip himself back upright, then, with intense determination, spreads his hard shell and lifts off, flies crazily back and forth a few times only to crash again: THUD-PLUNK!

We all wince. He's so big that it must hurt when he hits. And no matter how often we'd pick him up and pet him in our hand and say, "Listen Barney Beetle, we know you're on a mission from God and you just have to do this thing, but we don't want you to hurt yourself. Be careful next time, okay? Maybe we can build you a crash helmet and some tennis shoes or something, eh? Take it easy," he'd keep it up til we turned out the lamp, and there'd be no sign of him next morning.

Wednesday, October 9:

Last night we finally determined the source of a pungent odor which seems to fill the air every evening. Low to the ground, with long stringy roots, a few green plants have managed to stay alive by carving their way
into the hostile salty niche along the beach between high tide and the rest of the local flora. Remaining unobtrusive during the day, these small, tough skinned shrubs produce an abundance of pale yellow flowers which open up as the sun sets and exude a potent perfume, apparently to attract the large moths we’ve observed fluttering about them. There are many things going on here which we are just beginning to notice.

American civilization visited us today in the classical form of five surfers. We couldn’t believe our eyes when we looked out on the normally barren sea and perceived what would have been a common sight were we camped on a California beach. Do you know how far away from everything we are? After the surf died out a few of them meandered over to chat with us. It turns out they venture this far south once every year or two in search of the perfect wave, and were just as surprised to see us here as we were them. They call this place Hell because it’s so hot. We would almost concur except for the many wonderful aspects of the area which allow us to overlook the heat. I think we were all glad to see these gringos depart and leave us to our privacy. Are we becoming Mexican?

Mind Control and first aid classes occupied us this day. I got to make dinner, abrain dish and pudding. Delicious. But more important than that was SHOWERS. Yup, we actually took our second showers today. (And it was about time.)

Ed did an Awareness Hour this morning which focused on our present needs as a group. He basically said, "Don’t criticize or react harshly to the actions of others before recalling that you too make brilliantly blunderous judgments. None of our mindsets or modes of logic are identical, and there’s more than one way to do a shmek pit. Consider the effect this other person’s actions will have on the Universe at large, and then decide if it is worth creating a bunch of negative energy around yourself over such a little thing. Perhaps you should jump on YOURself for reacting out of control to this stimulus rather than venting your childish anger at the person who is involved in showing you your weakness...."

"While I was working at Foster’s Freeze back in San Luis Obispo, I became more aware of the forces which influence a person’s mood. Customers who came in at closing time or at inappropriate hours were undoubtedly met with much less than my most gracious personality. And, vice versa, motorists who had pulled off the hiway after eight hot hours of driving were often anything but polite and patient. Worst of all, during a rush, the crowd outside became hot and bothered by waiting, and us workers inside grew cross and irritable because of the vast number of orders piling up.

"An approach to this situation is, when dealing with others, understand what they are doing, the various forces acting on them from their environment, and you’ll better be able to see where they’re coming from. Without even knowing the person you can predict a lot of behaviors simply by knowing the activity they’re involved with. Add to this the awareness of the forces your presence has on them. Then by mulling over this whole picture in your mind you can tailor your manner of interaction to better balance the forces involved for the benefit of all."

Thursday, October 9:

We walked down the coast to Rancho San Luis this morning to pick up some fresh eggs and see where Fernando lives. It’s quite a walk. Completely desolate. We leave the only footprints on the beach. Finally we spot several tall palm trees and discover a carefully boarded over well, but there’s no sign of habitation. It isn’t until the five of us creep around the next point that a corral, thatched shack, and two barking dogs come into view. Upon closer examination a few pigs, chickens, cows, calves, and Fernando’s grinning face appear and we’re warmly greeted, led to the covered front porch dining area and offered chairs to sit in, Fer-
nando introduces Adelfa to us and she smiles a radiant brown eyes smile. Her face gives the impression that she has more of the native indian blood than Fernando, very pleasant features.

We begin to talk a little and within a sentence or two out come the well thumbed dictionaries. Communication is slow when you must look up every other word, but life is not so rushed here and the art of friendly conversation must be Mexico's national pastime. The two children are too shy to show themselves, so we just get a glimpse of them now and then. Fernando offers us coffee, which we decline, and homemade cheese dipped in dark amber honey which Fernando stole from the local bees. Now, we know the cheese isn't Pasteurized, and we have all heard the gruesome tales of diseases one can contract from consuming such edibles without discretion. There was some definite hesitation before we decided to go ahead and risk it. Come on, now. We've chosen to get into this experience here, so we may as well get into it. The hard white cheese and honey turned out to be an unexpectedly tasty combination, and we say so. It's obvious that much work went into producing these foods so we tone down our instincts to snack.

After awhile it's time to head back to camp. We purchase a couple dozen more eggs and Adelfa bestows a fresh eight inch round two pound loaf of cheese upon us as a gift. It's so fresh that it squeeks as you chew it up. She made it by hand this morning. And if you leave it sit around for awhile, she says, it will get hard like the stuff we ate with the honey. Then and there we decide to invite these people to our camp for dinner on Saturday, and they accept. It seems that they were as pleased and excited about the interaction as we were, and hoped to develop it further. And as we hiked back home against the heavy winds we were proud of ourselves. Already we were succeeding at breaking down the cultural barriers that separated us from our neighbors.

Clint's bodily system, however, is still battling one of those barriers. He's hasn't been feeling very well lately, no energy at all.

We all made a trip this afternoon over to Bruce's house to see if he could give us a lead on locating a mechanic who would come out to take a look at and hopefully repair Al's car. The truck needed a push start, but once on the road, only had to be lifted out of a sand trap once. We are setting fairly skilled at efficiently maneuvering our vehicles out of very sticky situations. Of course, with the four of us pushing, we've got a lot of muscle power to throw around. Now if we can only find someone to fix our little Chevy we'll be all set.

But Bruce isn't at home. The house he's watching in a beautiful open thatched shelter on the cliffs overlooking the Sea of Cortez. We hunkered down enjoying the cool breeze for awhile, left a note, and headed back to camp.

Which is a mess. The furious winds have torn our blue and yellow sleeping-shelter tarp, and all of our belongings are partially buried in miniature sand dunes. We are all too tired to do much but eat some dinner and crawl into our sleeping bags. There is no doubt in our minds that the Sand Man will visit us tonight.

Friday, October 10:

The wind is still blowing. Ed and Kat decide to make another attempt at rescuing our second around machine. They will drive into San Jose del Cabo to repair the loose and rattling exhaust manifold on the Toyota, and see if they can talk a mechanic into a rough ride out to Don Alberto's ranch to diagnose a sick car.

Al, Clint, and I stayed and fought the rasing winds and tried to do a little reading. Glancing up the sand dune behind camp I watched a few light yellow butterflies struggle against the heavy weather. Not thinking much of it I continued studying. Half an hour later Clint came up exclaiming, "Look at the butterflies!!!" And there were millions. All
fluttering in the same direction, all going against the same powerful headwinds. What force of nature could cause such determination in so many creatures? Was this a migration? Was there a fire, or hurricane, or earthquake about to devastate our camp? Were we too dense to see the obvious warning signs? This silent yellow wave disturbingly continued unabated for the remainder of the day, and no clue shed light on a cause or reason. We felt left out.

About noon we discovered that Kat and Ed had forgotten their sleeping bags... Should make for some interesting stories when they return.

The wind began to die back about sunset.

Saturday, October 11:

Dawn is so calm and peaceful here. I take a deep breath of fresh cool morning air and don't want to stop inhaling. It's so renewing, so clean and full of life that it seems like I just can't get enough. I'd bet that going without food here would be much easier than in the States. The air and sunshine which greets us each morning seems nourishing enough to support life.

Today Fernando and his family are supposed to be dining with us and we want to treat them to something other than our staples of TVP or beans. So even tho' it's rough water and high tide, Clint and I go hunting for fishies. The breakers are almost impossible to swim thru, but we make it out and within a few minutes Clint has spotted and speared the first fish. I net him and we head back in to avoid attracting sharks with our fresh catch, but the waves are even worse now. For ten full minutes I struggle futilely against them, being washed this way and that, making no headway. Twenty feet from shore I was so tired I almost gave up the battle. A slight lull in the onslaught allowed my escape, and with a final burst of energy I was able to reach the shore. Crawling up the incline I collapsed on the sand to recuperate. Clint dragged himself out just behind me.

We had one fish, and the mighty sea hadn't given him up very easily. But one fish was not enough to feed a multitude. Just the thought of voluntarily returning into that churning foamy mass of grampus water exhausted me and I dropped off to sleep in the warm sun.

Some time later I was considering an attempt at sitting up. My fingers absently played with the tiny white granules which were my bed. As I traced the outline of a fish I suddenly realized that I was not alone, and carefully turning my head I spotted two beady eyes staring intently at my wandering hand. A crab. And while my fingers danced about, the intrigued crustacean must have mistaken me for his mate and began to approach. Now I don't have any idea what was whirring around in that little crab mind of his, but for the next twenty minutes or so we played with each other, and it was incredible. I had nothing else that demanded my time or attention, and because of this I was able to get totally involved with what it must be like to be a crab. I was a crab. My five legged beast would dig around in the sand awhile and play hard to get. Then as the emboldened eight legger nonchalantly eased his way in my direction I would crab-walk towards him and he would skitter back into his hole. Finally I understood the crabby's style and was able to work my fingers in such a coaxing fashion that he actually came over and began feeling them with his claws. It was really cute until he pinched me...OUCH!!!...and I jerked my hand away, more from surprise than pain. I guess I wasn't ready to get into the heavy stuff. After all, it was our first date.

But now I feel that some link has been forged between me and these shore line scavengers, and whenever I get the chance I come out and flirt with them. I feel at home with the crabs.

Kat and Ed showed up and we all ate a hearty breakfast of Al's sour dough pancakes. They were back much sooner than we expected them. Inquiring as to why, Ed said that even without their sleeping bags they'd
tried sleeping on the beach last night, but it was so noisy and cold that by four-thirty in the morning the two of them gave up and began the return trip to camp. Apparently the duo had no luck finding a mobile mechanic, but, not without tribulations, did get the pick-up back together. Ed said it was a case of spending two hours looking for a bolt of the right size, and then an hour installing it. The typical Mexican mechanic is short on parts and tools, but has plenty of time to improvise. It may take longer, but it seems like a more peaceful and rewarding, and less wasteful lifestyle than many I’ve observed back in the U.S.

After breakfast and conversation Clint and I donned mask, snorkle, and fins once again and entered the liquid kingdom. However by now the sea had calmed down and it was so clear underwater we could see fifty feet or more. The sights were astounding, more than I’d dreamed they could be. As we peacefully bobbed alone the surface in fifteen to twenty feet of water a large, white spotted stingray flew by below us, school upon school of multicolored, distinctly shaped fish swam over and around the boulder strewn bottom, a yellow pufferfish waved its way amonst many black and white ones, barracuda galore. To be allowed to observe such an abundance of life at close range in this aquious environment was awe inspiring.

A big fish opened its gaping mouth to expose a neat set of sharply pointed teeth. While we stared in amazement a tiny version of the first intentionally swim into that wide open dinner invitation apparently as a guest of honor. We were shocked. How could he give up his life so carelessly. Ah. Not so. The little sur began darting in and out of that cavernous deathtrap eating the green algae and scum from his larger brother’s bicuspids and molars. It was stunning to see such goins on. I mean there were fish down there who would swim up and take big bites out of rocks, chew them up, and spit out sand. We were impressed.

We were also hungry. At just the right moment Clint speared a nice sized specimen and we swam in to shore just as Fernando, Adelfa, and the kids pulled up in their late model air conditioned burro. They parked their beast a quarter mile up the beach and walked in, perhaps so that particular pollutants wouldn’t be left as walking hazards within our camp. These people are definitely thoughtful.

After warm greetings Adelfa squatted down with me on the sand and helped scale and filet the fish. For dinner we served fresh home-made bread, fried fish, a grain dish, and peanut butter cookies for desert, and we all had a great time. What an education.

Once we had the dictionaries out and working we began to ask some decently complicated questions, the answers to which shed some light on the way these people think and live, and how they deal with this environment we share. We were fascinated as Fernando described the local wildlife. Large cats, wild donkeys, snakes, lizards, but we couldn’t figure out scorpions. The charades technique rescued us. It was so big, has long grey fur, and makes a sharp growling noise as it runs up and bites you with its pointed teeth. Oh! A little grey fox! Well, if cute, snuggly foxes were threatening, we wanted to ask him about all those butterflies that so intriqued us yesterday. Were they dangerous too?

"Si," Fernando said. We should be careful of those "mariposas peligrosas," those dangerous butterflies. We had lots of laughs.

And we learned some things about ourselves, too. At one point one of those large black flies landed on Clint’s leg and he took a violent slap at it and missed. The "mosca" buzzed around a bit more then landed on Adelfa’s leg. Moving slowly and easily she positioned her hand just right and, seemingly without effort, flicked her finger nailing that fly dead in and instant. All of us were watching. In that single moment, without the use of words, we each experienced a powerful lesson in energy awareness. Here were those supposedly backwards Mexican natives teaching us by example that it is far better to exercise your mind to perform a task with proper timing, efficiency, and control, instead of haste, slop-
liness, and waste. What could we say. The statement was obvious, and because we were paying close attention, it hit hard. What other subtle wisdoms had those people derived from their life in the desert forests of Baja California?

I took some posed photographs of the whole family and promised them copies. And when we described our car situation, we found that Don Alber-ts is a very good friend of theirs, and that if we could take them into town with us in a couple weeks Adelfa had a cousin who was a mechanic and would probably be willing to take a look at our machine. These folks were turning out to be down right fine neighbors, and they even seemed to enjoy our company. How lucky. How wonderful. As we waved "adios," we were already excited about our chance to get to know them better.

However, enough playing for today. Time to cart those water bottles again. Only this time I just slopped that fifty pound jug on my shoulder and walked the entire way back to camp without stopping once. Amazing!

But Chaos made another attempt on our well being. Al walked to the truck for his bottle and found a column of smoke rising where he thought the vehicle should be. Racing to the scene he discovered that the hot sun was focused thru a full water jug directly onto a smoldering pile of rags and dry leaves. A perfect trail of combustibles lead from the glowing embers to two spare gas cans. If Al had not discovered and defused this potential bomb we may not have had any truck left. I think Murphy was upset at Albert. When he returned and set his bottle down in camp Al had a neat black hole burned thru his bathing suit by that same bottle.

Later in the evening after cleaning up the kitchen, we were settling ourselves down to finally do some studying. Clint was preparing utensils to extract a nasty thorn from my heel, and Ed had done after the last of the water bottles. It was dark, our lanterns were contentedly chortling away, then some unfamiliar voices began drifting up the normally unpeopled beach. Who could that be?

Out of the black appeared Ed with his water bottle, followed by Abel Olachea, the owner of the fig tree, and a tanned, stout man who identified himself as Juan Pedrin. To our surprise Juan spoke American with a near perfect accent. He claims to have been an Math teacher in San Jose del Cabo for the past thirty years, is now in retirement with a government sponsored pension, and runs a small ranch to grow foodstuffs. He says he hunts a lot, and had with him a small noisemaker which he said mimicked the sound of a hurt rabbit. Good for attracting foxes and large cats. We convinced him not to blow it much while in our camp... Juan also likes to play baseball and volleyball, and plans to perhaps purchase some cattle to raise. He seems like a good man to know.

We entertained for an hour or so. Juan preferred to talk in Spanish, and he, being a teacher, did not hesitate to correct us quite often. Attempting intelligent conversation with an interesting talkative person is an excellent way to learn a foreign language. A few days of this would have been far superior to any Spanish class at school. However, it was setting late and we wanted to cool our minds. We said goodnight to our visitors and all sighed very deeply. It had been a very full day.

Sunday, October 12:

Clint and I did a bit of skin diving in the morning without weapons. Then it was time for Mind Control class.

We sat down beneath the blue and yellow shade shelter and began to talk, but it wasn't working right. Everyone had a poor attitude and no one was communicating well, so Clint called for a break. When we returned we tried to discuss what had happened. It got a bit hairy as we all seemed to jump on each other without taking responsibility for what we had done with ourselves. Clint and Kat were having some trouble working together teaching as a team, and Clint even said he couldn't teach anymore
ADELFA, VIRA CRUZ, FERNANDO, AND FERNANDITO.
ADELFA, VIRA CRUZ, FERNANDO, AND FERNANDITO.
in a group. We kept talking, however, and finally decided that we would try once again in the afternoon and see what happens.

We each went our own way for two hours. I walked to my private part of the beach to think and read and write, and to swim in my favorite tidepool. Clint took Al skin diving for his first time, and Ed and Kat stuck around camp. After awhile the general feeling was much more positive and we were able to hold a profitable session.

Monday, October 13:
The day felt like it went by faster than the speed of time, but we somehow managed to cram a lot in. After devouring Ed’s SUPER scrumptious peanutbutter pancakes, we repaired the tarp, had an excellent Mind Control lesson, and then I went out onto the rocks and collected sea snails for dinner. Large waves threw me into the frothing sea a few times but I still collected a small bucket full. One variety spilt out a white fluid that stained my fingers dark purple and made them stink very strongly of garlic. I decided not to put them in my snail, cheese and raisin soup, but it turned out well anyway.

Al shared an Awareness Hour with us. "An efficient technique for quickly getting to the bottom of things is to hold a conversation between yourself and an appropriate "devil’s advocate." For instance, if you feel certain that you are right about something but would like the see another point of view, choose your partner to be someone whom you know would disagree with you. If you wish to discuss a factual topic, call up an expert like Einstein or an author of a book. If you wish to cogitate over spiritual matters visualize yourself talking with Jesus, or Krishna, or even God for that matter. There are no limits. Pick out the best counselor you can think of, (or consult with a fabricated personnel director who can help you determine the most appropriate guide) imagine very clearly what it would be like being in this person’s presence including all of the details, state very clearly exactly what you want to talk about or understand or know, and then proceed to hold your conversation. A properly chosen partner will ask you all the questions which you may be afraid to ask yourself, point out all the weak parts of your plan that you wouldn’t bring to his attention, and perhaps add bits and pieces of information that you did not know you were aware of. This is an excellent way to get around your defenses and tap into those hidden subconscious potentials which are available to all of us."

I taught first aid in the afternoon, followed by our last Mind Control class. Ed and Clint had a fun time in the evening playing guitar and flute together while the rest of us read and wrote. We all feel very much at home here on the beach.

Tuesday, October 14:
Today is sort of a free day where we can go our own ways. In the morning I taught Kat her first lesson in skin diving. Mainly floating around in the shallow pools, watching the small fishies and getting accustomed to the feel of breathing thru a snorkel with her face under water. She discovered it to be more difficult than it appeared to be. But so is most everything. All it takes is a little practice.

The day passed easily while we studied and ate banana bread. Come evening it was Clint’s turn for an Awareness Hour. His stated purpose was to present an experience in which Kat could practice her situational awareness, Al could increase his self-confidence and leadership abilities, and Ed and I could get better at empathizing.

Clint had us all lay in our beds as we might normally be, the lanterns lit. He told us we were to deal with the following situation as if it really happened to us. Two gunshots in rapid succession are heard from the dunes to the south of us. The first causes Clint to cry out in pain, grab his shoulder, and double up on his cot. The second shot explodes in-
to the lamp above Kat and Al's bedding spewing flames and burning liquid.
next five minutes do everything and direct everyone to do what you think
must be done.

Next, Al. Based on your analysis of the situation, quickly work out
a plan to deal with all that is going on. Actually deploy all personnel
and equipment and make your plan work.

Phyllis and Ed. Assume you two are to apprehend and incapacitate the
source of the shots. Quickly work out a method, including communications,
by which you can get close enough to be effectively offensive while preserving
your skins, and then execute your scheme.

It was all quite dramatic, but I think we all realized we blew it.
At least if this situation, or some permutation of it, should arise we
would have a better idea of how to deal with it. Sometimes more like e-
vacuating camp, taking Clint with us, getting him to a doctor as soon as
possible, a scout in the lead. Abandon all equipment or attempts at coun-
ter-attack unless there was absolutely no other choice.

Anyhow, we were all pretty aware of anything suspicious lurking a-
round in the dark that night....

Wednesday, October 15:

Today we go to La Paz to acquire phase two of our typhoid shots, re-
plenish our water, recheck about extending our visas, and other errands.
After eating and consolidating our remaining water into the minimum number
of containers, we read for awhile and I took a refreshing saltwater shower.
Then I helped Clint work a "case." While I read from the manual and
recorded what Clint said, he went to his alpha level and investigated Don
Steinberg, an old friend of mine Clint didn't know. With no other facts
about him than his name, age, sex, and approximate location on the planet,
Clint was able to accurately describe his physical body, detect what was
ailing him, and send healing energies that would help Don heal himself.
Clint even walked around inside Don's head for awhile, and all this from
over a thousand miles away! It was the neatest thing to experience. I
want to practice these new skills now too!

We gathered ourselves together to hike out to the truck, anxious to
make our journey to the city. Still, we had some trepidations. It could
not possibly be an uneventful trip. The Gods of Chaos are powerful in
these parts, difficult to deceive. Could we possibly escape their in-
fluence? What if they gave us a problem we couldn't handle?

Our worries did not go unrewarded.

Halfway out to the main road our muffler began to rattle violently.
We stopped, panned out, and discovered a necessary nut and bolt were no
longer with us. A good rummage thru spare hardware still left us without a
large flat washer. But if you maintain a generalized improvisational at-
titude, are open to and aware of the true potentials of your situation and
see it as it is, not just as it is supposed to be, it once again becomes
obvious that there is more than one solution to any problem.

We'd always wondered why the Mexicans left beercans almost intention-
ally along the sides of their roads. You see, the cans are there for a
purpose. The Mexicans use them as a readily accessible improvising tool.
When they are stuck with a broken down car five miles from nowhere, they
can pick up an old beercan, modify its geometry as necessary, and use it
to repair their machine. Just like we did. Two beercan bottoms, removed
with a can opener, holes punched in the center with a nail, and stacked
one on the other makes a sturdy washer that, to this day, holds the muf-
fier to the underside of Ed's little red pick-up truck.

As previously mentioned, our two and a half hour long dirt driveway
was an only slightly scaled down model of the Grand Canyon, and we were
incessantly caressing Ed's fatigued conscious with the chanted mantra,
"Take it slow...." But Ed would still set to feeling like he was driv-
ing a D-9 cat or an unbroken pony, and on this particular bounce, as the truckbed flew up, it inelastically collided with a partially full five gallon water bottle that was still trying to complete its previously launched parabolic path. The glass made a wonderful noise as it shattered but we then had an ugly mess to clean up.

And it began to rain.

At least the truck finally got washed. All five of us couldn’t sit in the cab so we stashed the perishables up front and Al, Clint and I rode out the storm standing braced against the roll-bar. Even with ponchos on we got wet, but dried off quickly in the freshly washed sunlight and dry desert air. Poor Ed had to drive the slippery mud roads.

We did once again survive and make it to La Paz by dark. Paved roads are really impressive. Even picked up a Mexican hitch-hiker. He jumped right in back with us as proved to be a pleasant fellow.

El Restaurante de Mazatlan served turtle soup. Kat ordered it. I had Pollo a la Mexicana. Clint ate some thin, tough steak, and Ed and Al each chose Machaca Carne. We savored fresh squeezed orange juice too.

During dinner Clint was being extraordinarily quiet and he seemed unset. When I asked how he felt he kind of turned those little boy eyes to me and said, "I’m getting sick again." Poor guy. I think all the excitement of actually going into town and seeing civilization, being able to drink sodas and maybe even getting mail from the outside world ties his stomach in knots and he sets ill even before we reach town. Still, we managed to coax him to walk around town with us in search of a platanos split for dessert.

Nights in town are really interesting because a whole new surge of life and energy resonates in the air. It’s cool out. You can move without sweating too much. The contents of vendors’ carts and stands change from ice cream and fruit to tacos, and “hot dogs” smothered in what Mexicans believe Americans load their weiners with.

We never did find our ice cream, so we finally retired to a slightly shabby public beach a couple miles northeast of the city. Rolled out the old sleeping bags and started sawing logs. Of course this deserted little out-of-the-way beach of ours turned out to be quite a lively smooching grounds and hang-out for the local teenagers. We were serenaded to sleep by the latest Mexican rock on the newest of car stereos, interspersed with empty beer bottles bursting on rocks and drunken laughter.

Many sheep jumped over the fence that night, before we slept.

Thursday, October 16:

Dawn broke with a clear sky, and we were up bright and early watching boats pass in the channel and writing letters. Heading back to La Paz around seven-thirty we found the town hopping with people opening shops and doing early morning business while it was still cool. We had very little trouble getting our typhoid shots. We simply (ha!) explained our situation to a knowledgeable Doc in the hospital and he called the local health clinic and made arrangements for us. When we arrived we were heeded past twenty or more local folks into a back room where a nurse about four foot five rubbed down our suntanned arms with alcohol. She was an expert shot. We swooned over, she stood on her tip-toes, and when she jabbed us with the needles it didn’t hurt a bit. Plus there was no fee, another surprise.

‘Tweren’t so easy getting our visas extended. Al did get a new copy of his lost visa, but we were told to go to Cabo San Lucas to modify the time limit of our visas ten days before they expired. What a goose chase!

The rest of our stay in town was spent forty-five minutes looking for just the right lunch stand, thirty minutes looking for some good ice cream, and another hour trying to buy onions, eggs, and do the laundry. In a laundromat!

When we went to get our jugs refilled, the workers at the water purification plant recognized us gringos from before and were open to our
questions about the filtration system they had set up. Eventually we got a complete tour with all the details, and it approximately translates like so: water from La Paz’s fires is filtered thru silica sand, activated charcoal, some kind of sulfur, an ion exchange column, and then it is finally irradiated with ultraviolet light. The finished product is the stuff we carry a mile along our beach and treat with such care that you’d think our life depended on it or something. The man told us that in the good old U.S.A. the purification plant would be much larger and the liquid would go thru twice as much cleaning. Oh, yeah?

This always asking questions and being interested in everything attitude has come to be our standard operating procedure. And it works incredibly well at getting us into adventurous experiences we’d never dreamed would be open for us. People are almost always happy to share what they know about or believe or can do if you’re sincerely interested. The common things are best, most profound and subtle. And as the people become excited about your interest in them, they also begin to figure it’s okay to ask some questions about your life, your experiences, what you believe. Because they’re truly interested too. And when you’ve finally gotten to a level of candid confidence, it becomes exeruciatingly frustrating to not know enuf Spanish to communicate about those delicate personal, philosophical, political, or religious subjects that lie at the heart of the being with whom you are interacting. It’s enuf to motivate you to go home and study your ALM Dialogs from Highschool.

Ah, well. A brimming bag of pan dulces (Clint the Editor’s Note: Pan dulces are sweet crispy baked goods. It is somewhat embarrassing to admit to the quantity of sugar we consumed during our Fall Quarter Experience. Bakery, popsicles, banana splits, sodas, brown sugar, candies, etc., etc. I have, since 1975, become more aware of the deleterious effects of overindulgence, or even just continued moderate use of this potent, non-nutritive, but ever so abundant and popular, big-business-backed, habit-forming drug. For enlightenment I recommend you read William Dufty’s "SUGAR BLUES," then liberate yourself.) completed our stay in La Paz, and we headed for home. Night caught us only halfway there, so Ed pulled off the hiway into an old dirt road. It being the only smooth level place around we laved out our sleeping bags sardine style and set to dreaming. During the night I awoke when I heard a bell clanging and coming nearer and nearer. Clint’s eyes opened too and together we sat up to take a look. A huge cow was just about to step on Al. It stopped dead when it saw us move, then decided, to the extent that it decides anything, that we were harmless lumps, and continued on around us, calmly chewing its cud. I wonder if it even had its eyes open as it wandered along its familiar path. I’m sure glad we sat up and startled it. Poor Al might have been squished.

Friday, October 17:

The next morning, believe it or not, was actually cold! We rose early, stowed our gear, and discovered that our good old truck had decided not to start. What was it this time? The injection switch?

Using two editions of the improvisor’s handiest tool, the paper clip, Al and Clint hot wired the car. Ed then added this specially bent clip to his key ring. The remainder of our journey home was trouble free.

Bundled up tightly in down sleeping bags three of us enjoyed sightseeing from the chilly truck bed. We even spent the time to explore a small farming village down a side road. It was a quiet town where the plows were horse pulled, the catholic church stood out as the major structure, and where we received many stares. Few tourists venture thru these parts I’d wager.

Finally arriving in San Jose, we checked into the Oficina de Correos and discovered, to our excitement, that we’d received MAIL! Yes, we were all rather hoping for a letter or two. Ed, Clint, and I had contact from
the outside world. Of course we all passed around our letters so as to have the illusion that we all got more than we actually did. We ate lunch at our favorite taco stand and departed for the last leg of our return trip to camp. We noticed that it must be approaching tourist season around here. The pale skinned creatures are becoming more abundant. The funny thing is we all tend to feel inclined to walk on the other side of the street from them. Most wranglers we talked with just didn’t get involved with the local people here. They were in Mexico to escape the cold north, to go sport fishing or surfing, but not to experience Mexico. Too bad. Such attitudes are the source of wringo’s classically bad name.

Back on the beach once more it was Friday afternoon, not that it mattered much here, and we were again ensnared in that most enjoyable of pastimes, totting water bottles back to camp. On our way for the second bottle each, Al, Clint, and I drifted into a heavy conversation concerning teaming up with others, faith and trust in a friendship, and such subjects. We talked so long sitting by the truck that Ed came looking for us and eventually it was Al and Ed who carried the last two bottles instead of Clint and I. Understand the trick? Naw, not really. I actually have grown to like the physical and mental exercise of carrying such a load across soft sand in the hot sun.

The rest of the day we spent studying, eating, and sleeping.

Saturday, October 18:

Today was a day of reading, lobster hunting, two Awareness Hours, and a visit from Fernando and his family. We talked for a good long time. They brought us gifts of more home-made cheeses which Adelfa had made this morning. They are very happy, good people. We arranged to to go to their house tomorrow at ten in the morning to learn how to make cheese and tortillas. What fun!

Both Al and Clint did Awareness Hours. Al’s went like this. "There have been some inter-personal frictions caused by people’s cautions in certain areas. I would like to discuss this situation as I think that a person’s individual set of cautions is as unique and should be as respected as his set of values. The two are one and the same."

"I have been accused of being over cautious, but I feel that this is only in certain areas. For example, one night recently, we all slept on a dirt road together. Nobody thought it unusual that Clint worried about bandits and slept with his knife by his head, but I was laughed at for wondering about being run over. Looking back, my worry seems a lot more probable then his. Also, just today, Phyllis was telling Kat not to be so over-cautious in the water, and yet she has told me that I’m not careful enough.

"I think that rather than depending on one or two specific instances which are grating on your conscience to base your attitudes and assumptions about a person on, that a broader spectrum awareness including the person as a whole will provide a more accurate and balanced picture. Just as we do not all have the same set of values in any given situation, we also do not have the same set of cautions."

Clint’s shared Awareness concerned responsibility. "Say there was a park in the middle of town, and the park had a forest, and the forest had a path thru it that many people were accustomed to walking. Say one night you decide to dig a fifteen foot deep tiger trap with sharpened poisoned sticks implanted in the bottom, precisely in the middle of that path, and then you camouflage it over with twigs and leaves and go home. Next morning, bright and early, a man comes jogging down that path, falls into the tiger trap and dies. Who is responsible for his death?"

"Now say you didn’t dig that tiger trap yourself, but someone else did, and you are the first person the next morning to go walking down the trail. But you are a jungle expert. Many a time you have dug your own tiger traps in the wilds of Africa. So as you walk down the lane, you are
aware, and you all of a sudden notice a few specks of fresh dirt and an
unnatural looking patch of leaves on the ground. You freeze, drop to your
hands and knees, and carefully inch forward. Sure enuf, a freshly dug ti-
ser trap! So you walk into the nearby bushes and wait. Next person who
approaches is a little old lady who can't see very well. You watch her
come. She walks this path every morning for exercise, only this morn-
ing she falls into the tiger trap and dies. Who is responsible for her
death?

"I contend that a human being is just as responsible for his inac-
tions as hesh is for his actions. That if a human being is aware of a de-
structive or harmful consequence and does not warn the other persons in-
volved, then hesh who stayed silent or inactive is also responsible.

"AWARENESS BREEDS RESPONSIBILITY."

Sunday, October 19:

Why is the time going by so fast? We only have forty-three more days
left to our experience here. We must make the best of it.

Today I was awakened by a towel landing in my face. How simply
charming. But it did have a purpose. It was five-thirty or so, we had a
full day ahead of us, and Clint and I had to get an early start. I was
going to work my first ESP case, and I was a little afraid to begin as we
nestled comfortably at the base of a sand dune. Elaine Haile was my sub-
ject. Tho I wasn't sure I would succeed I was fairly accurate with my fo-
cused intuition. There really must be some kind of connection between all
human beings, probably all creatures both alive and "dead" on the planet,
and that's placing artificial boundaries on this oneness that most likely
don't exist. All you have to do is practice tuning into it, more like al-
lowing it to become apparent in your field of awareness. Gently.

Very interesting.

We finished just in time for breakfast, after which I taught a class
in how to use my camera so everyone can capture their images of this ex-
perience on film, and also so I can be in some of the pictures!

About nine-thirty we departed for Rancho San Luis. We found it takes
fifty minutes to walk the distance, so arrived twenty minutes late and
were taken immediate into the corral. I got seated on a three legged
stool, bucket between my legs, and was instructed to milk the vaca. Well,
those udders are warm. And you really have to squeeze pretty hard for the
milk to come out. The cow doesn't seem to mind too much. We all got to
try it. But let me tell you, when Fernando used all four pairs of
squeezers at once and filled up the pail ten times faster than the five of us could have put
together, we were duly impressed.

The way you efficiently milk a cow is to tie her neck loosely to a
fence, and tie her back legs and tail together so she can't kick or whip
you. Then let her calf loose. The little guy runs over and knocks that
old milk bag around with his nose getting things started for us. Pull him
away and let mommy lick him while we take over the nipples and squirt out
a full bucket of milk. When done, untie both critters so the calf can
drain his mommy udderly dry. This way she knows to go out and generate as
much milk as she possibly can because it's going to be used.

Besides the time when Ed spilled the milk, (Fernando told us not to
cry over it, tho we all felt badly,) and when Clint finally got the hands
of it the cow decided to pee, we did okay. For city folks that is.

Before I go on, let me describe for you Rancho San Luis. You've been
walking southwest along the deserted, white, sandy beach for nearly an
hour. Assorted flotsam, jetsam, wild donkey footprints, cactus, jagged
rock formations, tumbling waves at the edge of a vast sea, and endless
blue sky are all that you've seen until you round a bend and come upon six
or eight suspiciously large palm trees. Behind the next bend are a group
of cows mulling around a partly fenced in watering hole, a corral, and the
"YOU SQUEEZE HERE AND WHAT?" (COW, CLINT, KAT, AND ED)
"YOU SQUEEZE HERE AND WHAT?" (COW, CLINT, KAT, AND ED)
A narrow dirt road leads up over the hill to the rest of civilization, many tortuous miles away.

Like most of the structures in the area, the living shelter of Rancho San Luis is basically one large room with extensions. A concrete foundation for the driftwood-like board walls, thatched roof, and dirt floors throughout. The Kitchen, connected by a short open hall with a worktable and hanging, mouse-proof food storage basket, is bamboo walled and roofed over with a low, solidly blackened palm leaf roof. It has a covered utility porch addition holding another worktable and a large metal tub for general kitchen sink uses such as washing clothes. This also is where you skin rabbits and keep your eye on the larger auxiliary outdoor cooking fire. The living room is more of a covered patio really, stuck on the ocean side of the house. Two walls are open for capturing any cooling breezes that might happen by. A picnic type table is surrounded by straight backed chairs and basins of feed grain. Seated at the table you can peak thru an open doorway into the darkened sleeping room wherein lies a bed and a few shelves. And that's it. We never did figure out where the bathroom was.

Back to the story.

Carrying the full bucket inside we each had the opportunity to taste this pure, unpasteurized, unhygienized, unvitamin D'd, fresh, warm, real milk. I guess you could get used to it. The remaining contents of the bucket were slated for cheese production. But, yech. What's that?

Now be calm. You asked about this and you are truly interested. You will now find out exactly what you've been eating. This is how you make real cheese. You kill a mammal, any mammal, pig, rabbit, cow; doesn't matter. Kill it, remove and wash its stomach, salt it down so it doesn't rot, and place it in the shade for two weeks or so. A special bacteria starts to grow in there and when you've cultivated some very nice colonies you scrape out the stomach lining and mix it with water to make a solution known herabouts as quacho. (Is this rennet?) To about six liters of our fresh milk Adelfa added a carefully estimated one half cup of quacho solution, stirred the mess with her hands, and it immediately began to curdle. Ten minutes later, another stir, and the curds were settling to the bottom of the bucket. After a half hour or so, pour off the whey, mix in just the right quantity of salt, then squeeze and shape the leaf by hand, or place it in a cheese-cloth lined wooden form and weight it. Ah-so. I mean arriba! Cheese.

Retiring to the covered patio that served as living room, dining room, den, and garage, we were invited to stick around for lunch. By about this time we were all feeling a bit of hunger, and a bite of food sounded just perfect. While we were accepting the invitation Adelfa had procured a tin can full of dried corn, rattled it, and was feeding the chickens and workers who had come running to their familiar dinner bell. We thought this was just another farm house chore when, with a deceptively easy move she'd swooped up a plump unsuspecting chicken and was coddling it in the crook of her arm. The grab isn't what startled me, exactly. It's that it all of a sudden dawned on me that the bird was going to be lunch and Adelfa was offering it to ME to kill!!

Ugh... Now, the whole reason we were here was for experiences such as this, and it would be hypocritical to think these feathered creatures weren't killed somehow before they were served up in buckets at Colonel Sanders', but I just couldn't bring myself to reach out and grab this sweet blue eyed little chicken and swing it around till I broke its neck. Shall I say I chickened out? None of the other four volunteered either. Fernando did the honors. After awhile it stopped squirming around (gulp!) and we submerged it in Adelfa's boiling water for a minute or two. The hot liquid loosened the feathers enough that they came out with an easy tug. Kat and I helped pluck. Once the poor birdie was completely naked, a strict soap and water bath was in order, after which any remaining hairs were singed off over Adelfa's raised hardwood cooking fire. Then came the
dissection. We sat to see all the components of the inside of a chicken that never came wrapped in the little siblets has from the grocery store. Even a mess of small clear spheres which Adelfa said would have been the entire number of eggs the chicken could have laid.

And then we saw something that was to impress us over and over again. Not one scrap, not one calorie of that animal was wasted. Every last bit that we didn't eat was speedily devoured by the ever hungry dogs, pigs, and remaining chickens. Head, feet, guts, feathers, and all. The neat part was that the food calories taken in by pigs and chickens were actually being recycled to the family when they sat down to eat those other pigs and chickens. An efficiently closed system. Recycled also was the whey from the cheese making and all bone or other scraps from out meal. Everything! But I'm setting ahead of myself.

Adelfa chopped up the cleaned chicken and set it to boil for caldo, Mexican soup, with onions, potatoes, ground chilies, oregano, and salt. And she set us to making tortillas. Now Adelfa's kitchen is maybe eight by ten feet, soot coated, and low ceilinged. We were incessantly bashing our nosegays into hanging utensils, and up at the altitude of our heads it was filled with eye stinging smoke from the fires atop the carefully stacked rock stove. All five of us crammed in that tiny space, tears rolling down our cheeks, stumbling over tiny chickens, big pigs, and each other while trying to look up words in tattered dictionaries by flashlight in order to maintain some semblance of understanding of what we were setting ourselves into must have been an uncommonly funny sight for Fernando and Adelfa, not to mention the kids. We were sinnos. I mean, here were men washing dishes and attempting to cook tortillas, activities normally laughed at by men as women's work. But for us! We were being accepted right into the most basic rituals of this family's life and it was okay! We'd transcended the cultural barrier and were experiencing one of the most cherished and remembered moments of our adventure. We would look at each other and burst out smiling. It was great. It was wonderful. What can I say?

I guess I can say how to make tortillas.

First you shoo away the chickens and wash off your rock. You know, your hundred pound, smooth, flat metate. Every well equipped kitchen has one of these. It's over in the corner on a sturdy table. Pile on some flour, add salt, and a good sized glob of lard. You know it's high quality lard because it was you who rendered the pig fat. Mix it all up well, mashing in just enuf water to make it sticky, and squeeze off a dough ball the size of a large walnut. Now comes the fun part. Flatten the ball out a bit between your palms, then begin patting it back and forth, rotating it around so that the overhanging flap stretches out into an even, smooth circle. Right! Adelfa could do it every time. We were lucky if it didn't fall on the ground. When your tortilla is precisely shaped, or when you get too frustrated at pulling the sticky mess off your fingers to continue, flop it down on a hot, ungreased iron plate; flip it over when golden brown on one side, press out the air bubbles, and there you are. These were the most delicious tortillas I've ever tasted. Sort of like Matzo, only not crunchy. Mmmmmmm.

While dinner was finishing itself, Fernando showed us how to sharpen our knives properly. I think he was impressed that Kat and I each wore one at our waist. Womenfolk around these parts don't do that. Fernando had a forty pound rock specially imported from the town of Santiago, which he used for a sharpening stone, a Piedra de Fila. Dump on some water, rub your blade carefully back and forth across it like so, and our knives became the sharpest ever.

Ah, at last. Time to eat. We sure were hungry. And what a meal. Chicken caldo with rice, beans, hand made tortillas, and water fresh from the well. A classical Mexican repast. The kids laughed when we pulled lopsided tortillas out of the stack and blamed their odd shape on each
other’s poor craftsmanship. They all tasted the same to me. After eating we sat around the table, digesting, chatting, and enjoying the shaded breeze, until Fernando got out his horse, saddled it up, and gave us all rides on it. City folks, y’know. Oh, how fun. I took pictures of all the children posing on the horse: Al, Kat, Ed, Clint, Vira Cruz, and Fernandito. Clint watched intently as Fernando lifted Vira Cruz into the saddle, and then when it was his turn he positioned himself in front of Fernando to be lifted up too. That's how you get up there, isn't it?

Fernando could hardly stop laughing.

After trying on Fernando’s buckskin coat, we got a tour of some of the less obvious paraphernalia about his house. This included an iron spear which he has, on occasion, used to finish off stranded sharks at low tide. Apparently in May and June the sharks swim into shallow water to lay eggs. If Fernando can help it, a few less return to deep sea. Now he wasn’t bragging about being a shark killer. To him it wasn’t really something to brag about. Just a matter of living. But our roving eyes and insatiable curiosity dug out all sorts of stories and anecdotes that enlightened us and at the same time deepened the bond of friendship and understanding between us.

And what a day we had! Today we learned more about Mexican culture and life than we could have from any book or class. Our lesson today was titled Cultural Relativity and How to Cross the Virtual Barriers. Everything we learned will help us empathize and become comfortable with the great number of Mexican people we will interact with during the rest of our journey.

Simply stunning. The incredibility of it all. I was immensely proud of our success.

The walk home was thoughtful and relaxing, and the tacos Clint made over the campfire that night were a pleasing finale to a full day. The moon was brilliantly full as I drifted to sleep.

Monday, October 20:

After breakfast, Clint and I decided we both needed to get back into the wild and mysterious sea. Suited up, we swam out directly in front of camp, our main purpose being to explore. It wasn’t as clear as it had been, but was still clear enough to see fish swim by. We went left, to the north, entirely around the rocky point to the next sandy beach, a good long swim. While paddling along another large stingray swam right below us. I squeezed Clint’s hand in excitement and for some reason he jumped. Could it be that the last time I’d done that it was because I thought I saw a shark? We remained still as the majestic beast flew uncaringly beneath us.

Two weeks ago I told Clint that I’d seen a huge anchor near shore exposed at the lowest tide of the month right where we presently were. He didn’t believe me, so we made a five cookie bet. As we continued our sub-aquian tour keeping a sharp lookout, there, sure enuf, appeared the remains of a ship. A four foot diameter brass propeller on its fifteen foot long shaft, and also what looked like a large winch were discernable about the coral encrusted sea bottom. No sunken treasure, and we didn’t find the anchor. But Clint believes me now. I wonder what kind of cookies he’s going to make.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to studies. Come three o’clock Ed and I strolled over to invite Abel for dinner, but he wasn’t home. So we headed back and I prepared dinner for five.

Tuesday, October 21:

Ed decided he wanted to learn to skin dive this morning so I adjusted equipment to fit him and we tromped over to Ed’s Resort, his favorite cove, and played around in the waves. He had some difficulties breathing with mask and snorkel, but figured he was as prepared as ever to head out
AL EXHIBITING HIS EQUESTRIAN SKILLS AT RANCHO SAN LUIS.
AL EXHIBITING HIS EQUESTRIAN SKILLS AT RANCHO SAN LUIS.
into deep water. Poor Ed. It was deeper water than he thought. I have never seen such a look of terror on his face before. Unfortunately the ocean was a bit rougher than usual, and the huge waves which were trying to eat us didn’t make Eddie feel very comfortable, even if we really were safe. At least I knew it. This thinking like a fish in a constantly moving medium that you can actually drown in without too much trouble does take some practice. I recalled my first time.....and decided to head back to shore. By picking the proper time between wave sets it’s no problem. However, were I inexperienced, and had I seen those immense rollers exploding on the beach between us and dry land, I might have been a bit nervous too.

As we washed ashore, Fernando came striding up the sand and walked with us to camp. He had a proposition up his sleeve. He thought it would be neat if we would catch some fish and lobster and come to his house for dinner tomorrow. We said okay. But we were really thinking that we had a lot of studying to do and couldn’t consistently go to his house and play.

At low tide I held an Awareness Hour. Participants were to spend the time minutely investigating the exposed tide pools, noting everything they saw. Al and Clint even caught a three inch long lobster, the only one we ever nabbed, even tho the place was supposedly well known for its abundance of this prized food.

Clint, too, shared one of his awarenesses with us. “While sitting for truth in the spoon fed dogmas of my college science classes, I have often fumbled over the great empty holes and blank spaces left by the un-stated assumptions in theories and models, and I’ve wondered what common-knowledge facts investigators were aware of but could do nothing with because the data did not fit anywhere in their present world view. I would consider these anomalous facts a most important addition to my knowledge set as they would allow me to formulate more useful theories based on what was known to work, even if the patterns on which they were based were more scattered.

“In taking the Silva Mind Control class I was handed, by direct first hand experience, a very anomalous fact: that all healthy human beings are capable of obtaining information about the mental and physical well being of any other individual on the planet, at least. I have learned to do this by practicing a few mental exercises, and I have successfully taught others to awaken their own talents. And I know of no theory commonly accepted in the field of psychology that includes such phenomena as a norm of the human condition, no theory in physics that even hints that ESP is a possibility in our world, or no physiological or medical statement to the effect that Homo sapiens could operate at such levels. But, by my own direct experience I know that somehow I am able to gain new knowledge from a distance, and, I believe, so can everyone else. So here are three massive fields of human endeavor, psychology, physics, and medicine, all based on incomplete and therefore untrue assumptions, limitations, and data. And this crack was caused by just one small fact which doesn’t fit. How many more are out there waiting?"

“Have you got nuthin’ to do? Let’s go explore some of this incredible Universe out there, boundless in its surprises. We are just barely beginning to wake up.”

Wednesday, October 22:

While everyone else was reading, I baked bagels from scratch for the first time in my life this morning, and boy were they ever delicious. Well tuned noses prompted four greedy food monsters to creep from under the shade shelter each time I slid a fresh batch out of our little oven, and every last bread ring was quickly devoured as soon as it was cool enough to chew. Mmmmmmm. What a fun way to spend the morning.

By afternoon we were feeling like we really should study instead of catching those invisible lobsters and trekking over to Fernando’s for din-
der. So Clint and I were elected to deliver the message that the sea was
too rough and we had too much work to do to come visit them.

The walk was pleasant, and when we finally arrived we were very sur-
prised. Don Alberto greeted us in the livingroom, and Fernando had a .22
caliber single shot rifle laying on the table. He'd scouted over the o-
cean, seen how rough it was, and decided that we probably wouldn't be able
to catch any fish. To provide us with some food he'd hiked out into the
bushes and with one bullet shot a rabbit thru the heart, and right now
Adelfa was setting the table for all of us. We just sat there and said,
"No. We aren't eating. We didn't bring any food. It's not fair!" But,
she said, "Nonsense!" and we sat down to a delicious meal of fresh boiled
rabbit (Really fresh.), beans, rice, and corn tortillas, and talked for a-
while to let the food settle. We postponed the fish dinner, changed it to
our place, and invited Don Alberto too. Then departed for our home and
not here just in time for desert. Not badly planned, eh? Interesting how
things tend to work themselves out.

It's kind of neat how just a spot on the beach can feel like home to
us. Actually the whole planet is our home, and as far as I'm concerned,
it's a pretty nice place to hang out for awhile.

Thursday, October 23:

I sleep on the sand in my sleeping bag. Two nights ago I was awaken-
ed by a strange feeling. Slowly opening my eyes I found myself staring
face to face with a land crab, perched on my outstretched arm. I'd dis-
turbed his meal. He'd decided to eat me. I objected to his plan, scolded
him, and shooed him away. Seems like word is getting around about me and
the crabs. Thirty minutes later I heard something crawling on my nylon
bag and there he was again. So close to my face I could hear his little
mouth parts clicking in delight. I woke up three more times because of
that crabby. He just wouldn't give up.

Then there was the time when Al jumped clear out of his bed because a

 crab ran from one side of the shade shelter to the other, startling him
from concentrated reading. Another time we investigated a small scratch-
ing noise in the kitchen, pulled out the one gallon plastic jug of dried
corn and discovered a small mouse instead of half the original contents.

And not long ago Ed reached in to pull out a spice bottle and found him-
self holding a cute little snake instead. Such is life on the beach.

Let me tell you about salt water from the ocean. Fresh water here in
camp is only for eating or drinking. We brush our teeth in salt water,
wash dishes in salt water, clean ourselves in salt water, and whenever we
can, cook in salt water. There's roughly a teaspoon of salt dissolved in
each cup of water from the ocean. (It's 3.5% salinity by weight, 55% 
chlorine, 30.6% sodium, 7.68% sulfate, 3.69% magnesium, 1.16% calcium, and
1.1% potassium, mostly as sodium chloride (table salt) and magnesium sul-
fate (epsom salt). Just in case you wanted to know. These percentages are
very consistent except near river outlets.) So if you want to add a tal-
ble spoon of salt to the water in which you are going to boil up some beans
then replace three of the cups of freshwater you plan to use with water
from the sea. Use this same substitution in bread, soup, shlok, noodles,
rice, whatever. The fresh water savings really do add up.

Al's electronics class at ten in the morning was almost as shocking
as the impending storm. Tho we found it difficult to believe, the weather
was threatening rain and demanding we prepare ourselves. But it wasn't
til the drops began tapping us on the shoulders that we finally began to
move. All perishables into the tent. Everything else gets covered with
any available tarp. Down comes the study hall. We dove thru the open
tent flaps just as it really began to pour. And there we were. The five
of us; two crates of books, two guitars, five sleeping bags, a bow and ar-
row set, and an assortment of other sundries all unceremoniously dumped
into a thin, light green canvas. Sears tent perched on the edge of this
deserted beach in the middle of nowhere, hoping to be sheltered from the storm.

Well, we stacked everything we could in the center and settled down to a reasonably comfortable night's sleep. No. Not really. That would have been too easy. Our shelter soon began leaking from all sides and the ceiling, forming miniature models of the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Amazon, and the Nile. Interesting, but poorly timed. Kat volunteered to strip down, brave the wild wind and rain, tighten down all the guy lines, and dig a moat around the full perimeter of the floor so we could channel the flood towards the front where Al and Ed could bail.

The plan succeeded and we dozed off till about midnight when Ed became impatient and peered outside. It was no longer precipitating so he decided to grab his cot and risk sleeping exposed. Kat, Clint, and I followed his example. Fine until five-thirty when the sky let loose with fat Juicy drops it had incubated all night long. Hit the tent folks.

Friday, October 24:

We're planning on spending the entire day reading here inside the tent, waiting out the storm. This doesn't seem like such a heroic feat until you understand that our diet recently consists primarily of various sorts of legumes, and our bodies have become fairly efficient generators of natural gas. Each in his own style, of course. Let tell you we were not breathing your everyday normal fresh air. I mean, I'm laying here attempting to read my book and without warning the page blurs before me as the atmosphere thickens, my eyes begin to water, and my lungs refuse to inhale in the hopes that the offensive vapors will disburse to non-toxic levels before I black out due to lack of oxygen. This is the day we invented FART PLUGS: Flatulence Abating Recycle Traps.

The idea is this. We eat a lot of beans. Cook them in our pressure cooker each afternoon and consume them as our evening meal, and often as leftovers for lunch the following day. Each of us will wear a comfortable, custom fit anal tube leading to a sturdy plastic bladder held in a protective belt pouch at our waist. During the day every unit of gas generated will be kept from annoying fellow residents either audibly or olfactorily, and will be captured in the storage bubble. Additional bags can be substituted as necessary. Come supper time we will carefully feed the contents of our personal collections into a larger community receptacle, which is then connected directly to our gas burning cook stove, and placed under a slight positive pressure. In this way our natural gas by-products can be efficiently recycled to prepare our next batch of beans.

Clint finally ventured out and made us a large pot of hot oatmeal. It rained off and on the rest of the day, but so fortified, we decided that we might as well get really wet and go play in the crazy sea. Waves came tumbling in on top of the other in a very high tide. We would sit there and watch those rollers cruise in and take his bites of our beach, completely covering huge boulders and exposing new ones, carving and reshaping the sandy beach like a sculptor in inspired frenzy. The day had a lot of power, and as our hair was blown about in the electrifying winds we soaked it all in. I love days like this.

Late in the afternoon Fernando, Adelfa, and the kids came strolling into camp. They wanted to know if we were still alive and okay, and asked if we wanted to shelter at San Luis for the next night.

I just want to let you think about that for awhile. These people walked three kilometers to see if we were doing alright and to offer us the use of their home. They had worried about us all the previous night and almost came over in the midst of a raging storm. We don't see much of that kind of caring in the United States. We almost didn't know how to handle it. Thanked them. We'd lasted so far and probably would the next night, too. But we promised them that if a hurricane came and
blew what Fernando calls Rancho Campo away, we would come knocking at
their door. We spent the night in sleeping bags just outside the tent
ready to jump in at a moment's notice. We didn't need to move, however.
The dark sky cleared up, showing off all of its complete collection of
sparkling, brilliant stars.

Saturday, October 25:

The day dawned full of energy and we excitedly ran down to the beach
to play in all of the holes and rock crevices newly excavated by the pass-
ing storm. We called them jacuzzies, and one channel was especially re-
xhaling. You settle down in its bottom in race-car position and hold on
for dear life while a cool foaming wave sweeps in and wallops you from the
front. Just as you think you are safe and the thrill is over, the back-
wash smashes into you from the rear. As you are getting tumbled around
everyone else is leaning over the edge of the rock saying, "Relax, relax!"
By the time you climb out you're so exhausted you have to relax, flat on
your back. Then it's the next person's turn. Whooppee!

We read and wrote some. Clint took his bow and arrows and went
hunting for rabbit. Just as we started Electronics Class, Don Alberto
waddled into camp on the back of Aspen, the donkey. Oh, yeah. We have
guests coming! We held a scattered conversation with him as I began to
whip up some peanut butter soup. Kat made delicious dill bread, and I
fried TVP ham, potato, and onion patties. Just as well. Clint returned
without a catch.

Fernando and family arrived and we ate together under our sleeping
shelter. The meal was a success even if we had to use our chopsticks be-
cause there wasn't enuf silverware to go around, and even if we were not
eating any of those lobsters. We digested and talked about anything we
could think of. When the conversation grew a little slack, Ed entertain-
ed us with his guitar, and Clint played the flute and jugged. (No. Not at
the same time.) We were even able to wrestle with the kids.

As our new friends took their leave and began walking down the beach,
Clint was being a little wierd. He flopped himself down onto the pile of
sleeping bags, shut his eyes and sighed, exhausted. We just HAD to revive
this unsociable lump. It took all four of us to lift him up, struggle
down to the waves and toss him in.

Fernando, Adolfa, and the children watched us from a couple hundred
yards away and appeared to laugh at our antics. But we later found out
that the two kids, who were too shy to look at us and who we never even
suspected might know our names, cried out, "Oh, look what they're doing
to poor Clinton. We have to help him!" and then started to sob.

Oops.

Sunday, October 26:

Whee! Finally some time to be alone and study. About mid-morning
Clint looked up from his book and noticed some fins swimming around not
far out to sea. Are they sharks? He retrieved my binoculars and we look-
ed. WOW! It was a huge herd of dolphins surfacing, diving, and appar-
ently feeding on a school of smaller fish. They sure look like intelli-
gent animals, fun to watch. As we were being so entertained a pair of
seagulls appeared on the beach directly below our camp and waved at us.
They approached and told us we were famous.

Huh?

They'd ran into a surfer who'd spotted us here and had talked with
them about our experiment. They wanted to come see for themselves. So
we invited them into camp and conversed for awhile. Brooks and Diana, a
couple in their thirties, are living in the town of Todos Santos for the
same two months that we'll be here on the beach. The two of them own a
Mexican restaurant in Sun Valley, Idaho, named Su Casa, and were here on
a "business trip" investigating new recipes and food preparation techni-
DON ALBERTO AND PHYLLIS.
ques for use in their kitchen. Brooks is a knowledgeable skin diver and
fanatical surfer. He'd been listening to the radio and told us a little
about the storm we had recently weathered. He said it was actually a
small hurricane originating near Acapulco, doing some damage in Mazatlan,
then petering out (Who was this Peter fellow anyway?) as it crossed the
Sea of Cortez, so that what we saw of it was just the tail end. The
waves gathered their energy from the high winds, and had they more room
than the two hundred mile width of the Sea to main momentum they could
have grown much larger.

Diana talked with Kat some, and described her favorite recipe for
fish head caldo. The couple asked intelligent questions about our living
situation, seeming to be truly interested in what we were doing.

After they left we spent the remaining daylight hours at our studies
and taking showers. Clint gave me lesson in the care and use of the bow
and arrow, and now I can use it whenever I want. It's quite a powerful
weapon, tho requires some practice. I still wonder if I could actually
shoot a rabbit or not.

Following dinner was a brainstorming session where we worked at de-
scribing and defining awareness. All of us stayed up till eleven writing
letters to be mailed tomorrow by the expedition to town. It's time to
renew our water supply.

Monday, October 27:

I was up and whizzing around by four forty-five cooking pancakes and
cinnamon sweet rolls. The rest of the gang began to stir just before sun-
rise, and we condensed our water containers before breakfast. It felt
good to sweat again from carrying empty bottles out to the truck. Al took
good of peanut butter and honey sandwiches to last him while he
waited at Don Alberto's to work with Adelfa's car-mechanic relative.
Clint and Ed would shuffle people around and do the errands in town, and
Kat and I guarded camp.

It was an easy peaceful day for me. I read and wrote quite a bit,
cleaned up the kitchen, dug a new shmek pit, finished baking the rest of
my sweet rolls, and practiced mind control exercises with Kat. She worked
the case of Cathy White, and did well.

About an hour after sunset, our three men stumbled back into camp.
Along with their tales of heroism they brought me three letters! One each
from Mom, Dad, and Craig. Boy, is it ever nice to get mail out here. In
the U.S. it's so taken for granted. In this isolated environment every
scarf of news is exciting. If there were a World War, it could be weeks
before we found out about it, so to be in touch with relatives and personal
friends about small every day matters is quite a luxury.

Al, Ed, and Clint met Fernando, Adelfa, and the kids at Don Alberto's
ranch. During the greetings they offered to share a pan of my freshly
baked buns with Don Alberto and his workers, but the invitation was mis-
understood to mean, "Here's a pan of sweetrolls for you Don Alberto."
They lost the whole batch. Al was worried that we'd never get the pan
back and we needed it for bread baking. But it was too sticky a situation
to clear up right then and they dropped it, figuring, "Oh, well."

Gathering everyone together they placed Adelfa with Vira Cruz and
Fernandito in the front cab with Ed, and Al, Clint, and the water Jugs
with Fernando in the back, and headed for town. Not speaking much Span-
ish yet, Ed lucked out. Apparently Adelfa and the kids were all car sick
within two minutes of that bumpy driving, and they didn't feel much like
talking anyway. The only thing Ed was really worried about was that the
smell of his farts would be detected over the stench of Adelfa's vomit
soaked blanket. While in the rear, Clint and Al had some amazing talks
with Fernando. This timid Mexican rancher now knows Clint well enough
that he can go into his brain and feel across the language gap to determine ex-
actly what Clint is trying to say. Fernando puts energy into understand-
ing just as Clint puts energy into finding the correct words to express himself.

Fernando seemed to know people from all the ranches they passed, al-
ways waving or shouting a greeting to one friend or another. Clint said
that they met up with Brooks and Diana, the two gringos who had visited us
at our camp. They were driving out, too, and rather recklessly passed up
the Toyota. About a mile further our guys came upon them hding up on a
barbed wire fence in the middle of the little town of Santa Catarina. It
looked as if they were going too fast to make the turn and had slid off
the side of the road. Not much damage was done but the police around here
don't get to see much action so took it upon themselves to make a big deal
of it. That's what you call fast acting karma. Clint, Ed, and Al last
saw the couple in the custody of the San Jose oficinonte. I guess they
were separated from a few of their green American dollars and eventually
released.

Just down the main road they all stopped and visited with Adelfa's
brother. After chatting, arrangements were made to meet him at eight the
next morning at Don Alberto's. This saved having to leave Al to deal
with the car situation all by himself as we originally planned.

And once in town they dropped Adelfa and the kids off at Adelfa's
sister's place. It was an interesting situation with six families all
living together in the same complex among cases of turkeys, parrots,
rabbits, and a veritable jungle of potted plants. They gave permission
for the men to fill our water bottles from their faucet.

Fernando was standing in front of a store while Ed and Clint were
errand running. They turned their backs for a moment and Fernando had disap-
peared. So they waited where they had been, not knowing what was going
on, for almost a half hour before this thin Mexican with the large front
teeth just as mysteriously reappeared. No explanations. This must be an
example of the phrase, "un minuto." One of these minutes can be up to a
half hour long. The chores in town consisted of some shopping, retrieving
mail, finding an ice cream, and regrouping with Adelfa. The ride back to
camp was just as bouncy, but uneventful.

Once back to Don Alberto's they dropped off our neighbors and were
very surprised to be handed not only their cleaned sweetroll pan, but also
a freshly killed, skinned, and eviscerated rabbit, head and eyeballs still
intact! What a treat!

Tuesday, October 28:

Ed and Albert set off early to meet the mecanico at Don Alberto's
prepared to do a hard day's work. The rest of us carted the newly filled
water jugs back to camp and then stuck around reading and talking. As
Clint and I were having a discussion on addictions we were surprised to
hear male voices. What? It's only eleven-thirty and Ed and Al are back
with huge grins on their faces. The car required only a pair of pliers,
a hammer, and twenty minutes to repair. Was this relative of Adelfa's one
of those ace mechanics? Sort of. He knew exactly what to do. Apparently
the problem was that the fly wheel casing was dented in by a rock and was
rubbing on the fly wheel. No problema. Es facile! It's easy! Our car
is fixed.

We have finally fully arrived here in Baja California, and our allot-
ed time is nearly half over. With this consideration we're tentatively
planning to extend our stay longer than the original two months, and upon
further discussion discovered that we were all interested in definitely
going on some similar adventure experience or edu-vacation a year or two
after returning to the U.S.A.

That evening we ate a delicious meal of rabbit, noodle pudding, and
skadies. Originally in the soup for flavor, Clint served the rabbit's
head into Al's shlok bowl for a joke. But being in the exploratory mind-
set that he was, Al took it seriously and began to pick at and eventually
eat the eyeballs and brain, and by the time he got to the tongue he was making such ecstatic eating sounds that we all had to have a taste. Not bad. A little strange, perhaps, but why not eat such delicacies?

Actually, Al did suffer some repercussions from his outlandish (we are in the outlands, you know) activities. They had to do with his growing reputation for eating anything.

Wednesday, October 29:

I took Al out for another try at snorkling and for some reason we could find no fishes to look at. Did the porpoises eat them all?

Our day was spent in concentrated study. Ed is becoming very skilled on his guitar with all the practicing he's done.

As evening overtook us, I found a land crab who seemed interested in me. Lying on my belly I used my finger techniques and pretty soon I was able to slide up to this cute little crabby and nuzzle his pinchers. He just sat there and let me stroke them until I got too familiar or moved quickly, then he would open those sharpened claws and snap at me. But I remained his trust. As I reached out to pat his eye stalks, he would retract them into little compartments against his body. Such amazing creatures these crabbies are.

As we sit in the lantern light come evening, we're often disturbed by large round June bugs who must be nearly blind. I'm trying to read and without warning one of these hard-shelled beetles smacks right into my face. And it hurts! It feels like a small stone whacking into my skin. After so graceful an entrance the insects then swarm around slowly on their backs until almost by luck alone they are able to right themselves and buzz around for another attack on my nose. We're all sort of paranoid that one of these bugs will hit us in the eye.

So while I was playing with this crab it was without much regret that I figured out a way to both please my new found friend and dispose of a local menace. I picked up one of these obnoxious brown bugs and handed it whole to the crab. He refused, then took it from my fingers, skillfully crushed it between those mean looking forceps so he could use its body for a bowl, and proceeded to lick his chops and enjoy a tasty meal as my guest. It really was cute!

Thursday, October 30:

Another lay around and read day.

Al and Clint went diving but saw nothing really exciting. Sometimes when I look out over the sea I can spot huse manta rays jumping clear out of the water, doing a back flip and disappearing with a splash. It would be fun to see one of these magical monsters up close while diving. At other times I'll see an entire acre of the ocean's surface boil with the flashing silver scales of tiny fish trying to elude the tireless jaws of predators. It's scary to watch the hunters' paths thru the constantly moving school as helpless little guys frantically try to leap out of reach into the air. What if that were me attempting to escape, swimming for my life?

Al and I did some Mind Control cases, but I can't say too much on the results. I don't have enuf feedback yet.

It was my turn to cook, and after we ate we sat on pickle buckets or cool sand and considered Al's awareness hour questions. "Is it possible to have absolute trust in someone? How far can you go, and how do you get there? Is there an art to trusting? What do you get out of it?"

Al's notes say that "We defined trust as 'putting person or property under someone else's control with the expectation that you won't be harmed.' Some of our thoughts were: Every person has his price. A healthy person would never put absolute trust in anyone. That is: shesh would not expect the trustee to honor the trust if it should become an unreasonable
task due to circumstances. There is an optimum point between trusting everyone and trusting no one."

Friday, October 31:

Happy Halloween!

But how can we celebrate? The Mexican people do not recognize this holiday, so everyone else planned to live it just like any other day. A delicious breakfast then hit the books. However, I wanted something more, and invited the others to my Halloween party after dinner tonight.

I made a trip over to Abel's to find the expense book and invite him to dinner. We parked both our cars at his place now, under the fig tree. On my hike, I discovered an excellent relaxation pool. It's far superior to both Ed's Resort and Al's Spa, and it must be a half mile from camp, for a dip in the cool, clear waters of this protected lagoonette is well worth the walk. But alas, Abel was not home.

I planned out an evening of festivity for All Hallows Eve. First contest on the agenda is brain mush with sweet and sour sauce. Hmmm... The rules are quite simple. Everyone must put his shlok bowl on a pickel bucket and when I say "GO!" the first person to snarf every brain without using his hands wins. The object at the end of the games is to accumulate the most number of points thus winning the Grand Prize. We begin. It's Ed and Al neck and neck, me right behind. We're setting the sticky mess slobbered all over our faces and up our noses, but we're laughing so hard it doesn't stay there long. A moth flies into my shlok bowl but I don't hesitate an instant. I snarf him right up too.

Our fearless eater Ed comes in first, with Al a close second. I'm near third and, ten minutes later, Clint finishes a drooling fourth. Kat refuses to play. Oh, well. We'll probably all get indigestion anyway.

Ding! Rest, rub down, then the second round begins. We stood in a circle, each holding the refilled shlok bowl of the person next to us. The object here was to finish eating your bowl of stewed fruit, and also empty the bowl you were holding for your neighbor first. GO! Here we were doing this again! I could just imagine a Mexican coming up and seeing these goings on. Ed made me laugh uncontrollably that I slightly wet my pants. I couldn't stand it. I could hardly even stand up. Clint took this spectacular event.

Okay. Everyone tie up your feet at the ankles, hop over to thisail filled with water, dunk your head in and without using hands, bite into a potato if you're lucky, an onion if you're not, and hop back to the finish line depositing your vegetable on the table. Well, Clint tried to gain time by purposely falling in front of everyone else to trip them. The plan worked beautifully except that then he was on the bottom of this huge tangle of hollwing, shrieking arms and legs. Somehow he still managed to hop across the finish line first.

Next was balloon races. These were the balloons that John Howell had sent with us carefully wrapped in an envelope marked "FOR EMERGENCY ONLY." Now was the time to use them. Move your colored bubble from there, out around the pylon, and back again without using arms or hands or mouth. Sharp grass and a slight breeze made this a tricky task, not to mention those ugly monsters who were trying to stomp your entry into oblivion. If your balloon gets popped, back you go to the starting point to get another. Finally all balloons were destroyed but one and it was mine. We had, as yet, no winners. Quiet now. Will she make it? Yes! Tadaa!

End of this madness. It was sure fun to laugh so hard, and we did set our exercise for the evening. Ed took first place and was honored with a kiss from the queen of the races, me, and the first piece of Al's special Halloween pie. There's nothing like a slice of warm, savory squash pie to top off a fantastic party. Ed proudly took the first bite and while trying to swallow it mumbled:
Ed: Hmmmm! This pie tastes like cardboard.
Al: Yeah, it does have sort of a yucky flavor.
Ed: How much zucchini did you put in?
Al: Oh, I added that whole bag of dried, shredded zucchini.
Ed: What? Al! We don’t have any shredded zucchini. All of our zucchini is in chips. That was shredded parsnips!

In case you’re interested, I don’t very highly recommend parsnip pie. We tried to feed it to the mice, but these usually hearty eaters wouldn’t touch it. Al’s pastry was laved to rest in the shmek pit, where it belonged.

After cleaning up a bit Ed got out the expense account he’s worked on, and for an Awareness Hour proposed that we think about what we want to do exactly for the rest of our stay here. In particular, do we consider extending our original allotment of time? Talking late into the night we developed four alternative plans to choose from:

1) Proceed as scheduled. Pack up camp about December 1, ferry across the Sea of Cortez to the mainland, store one of the vehicles, and tour until January 1, when Al must be back in school. The reason we are considering other plans is because it feels like there has not been and will not be enuf time here on the beach to study and play, nor enuf time to adequately explore the mainland.

2) Remain here until December 15, giving us a couple more weeks to work with, then sight see thru Mexico thru February 1. This is good for everyone but Al.

3) Same as number 2 but when the first of the year rolls around, Al takes a bus back from where ever we are to Mazatlan, picks up the stashed Chevy and drives back up to San Luis Obispo alone. But none of us would wish that drive on a single person, even if it is an ace improvisor like Albert.

4) Stay in Rancho Campo until March 21, not traveling Mexico proper at all. This is good for Ed as it cuts wear and tear on his truck, good for Al because he could skip another complete quarter of school that way, and good for the rest of us because it’s very inexpensive living here on our limited funds.

We postpone final decision until later as we’re all too pooped to pop and want to examine our plans in the clear light of morning.

Saturday, November 1:

At sunrise, Clint and I headed off into the dunes to see if we could do some heavy duty telepathy. We each went down deep into our alpha level, and while one would decide on and clearly visualize an object on his mental screen to project, the other would put on the sender’s head and try to perceive the image. Five trips, then we reversed the roles, but we had no success. I know that there is a simple procedure to do what is known as remote viewing, but that usually involves sending pictures of one’s environment, not mental creations. Still, I think there is no difference between the two and we should be able to succeed, somehow. What we need is more practice.

By popular demand I am whipping up a double batch of my famous bar- sels. Sixty of them belly sinkers should stop this gang of lunch-mouths. The wind is whipping our tarp so loud that sitting under it here I can hardly hear my thoughts well enuf to write them down.

Al and I went skin diving in the rough, choppy water, but saw no fish. Maybe they were all seasick.

Sunday, November 2:

We fall asleep rather early these days, about ten o’clock usually, and the sun doesn’t wake us til around six in the morning. That gives us a long eight hours of rest. Towards dawn I can feel my mind begin to get
lively and for the last half hour or so in bed I got a chance to do some detailed dreaming. We all do that. And it's really fun because commonly the first thing we do each morning is share dreams with each other.

Today Clint told us of the visions he experienced before the sun rose out of the ocean. They dealt with addictions, illusions, and John Fowle's book, "The Naus," and they had a moral. "You can't destroy illusions directly, but have to undermine their foundation before they will crumble before you. The main character in the novel, Nicholas, was so deluded by what wasn't really there because he was so dependent on his addictions to the way he thought the world had to be. If you resist habitual modes of perception, then your mind will be accustomed to determining its own basis of truth and illusions won't deceive you." How's that for a thought for the day?

Late this morning Al took a running dive into the waves right below camp to refresh himself, but hopped right out again, limping. His toe had a small triangular cut in it, and he said it stung. The only thing we could figure it to be was a stinger ray wound. It must have hurt mightily, because all during my Awareness Hour on addictions, from Ken Kayes, Jr.'s book, "Handbook to Higher Consciousness," Al was squiggling and squirming in agony, and there was nothing we could do about it.

Then, just after I'd taken a shower, Clint and I got into a wild tickling and wrestling match right down in the sand. Ten full minutes of arm twisting and leg biting with the others cheering from the sidelines. So much for a clean body, but the exercise was worth it.

Monday, November 3:

Clint dug a new shmek pit this morning; Al's foot feels much better. Ed proposed that we co-create a handbook on the results of experiments in mind control as we practice them, and Clint and I had some positive results in our ESP practice.

Later, Kat and I had another electronics class from Al, and then I practiced some with the bow and arrow. An exotic dinner of falafel patties topped off a productive day in the lives of five gringos on the beach.

Our kitchen has been very attractive to a group of large, rather intelligent black and yellow wasps. We're not sure if it's the water in the dish pan or the crumbs on our work table that attract them the most, but several of us have placed an appendage in the wrong place at the wrong time and were severely stung as a result. Not fair! We live here too. In addition to biting us, on occasion a wasp will find his way inside the globe of one of our lanterns and disintegrate a precious filament with the beat of his powerful wings. Somehow we needed to communicate to these bothersome creatures that we aren't to be messed with.

Al discovered that if you leave the dirty soapy dishwater out, it attracted droves of the bugsies, and if you moved slowly and blew fiercely you could dunk three or four at a time into the water. Once they were wet the soap decreased the liquid's surface tension and they couldn't crawl out eventually drowning. What a way to spend your morning. However, after a couple days of pouring fifty or sixty wasp corpses into the shmek pit, we weren't bothered so much. I think they got the hint.

Clint shared an awareness with us. "The awareness of not letting anyone else rush you or hurry you thru an activity if you don't want to be rushed or hurried. The idea is not to respond instantaneously to anyone's beckoning (i.e., the telephone) While concentrating on an important thought or dangerous or delicate procedure, it is important to monitor all requests for your energy and respond if and when you are ready. The focus of your attention is totally under your calm, relaxed control, not just any passer's by."
Tuesday, November 4:

Sunrise found Clint and I wading out into the opulant water with the hopes of catching two fish for supper tonight. This time, tho, the surgical tubing powered, aluminum shafted Hawaiian sling was in my hands and the net was in Clint's. This was my first attempt at fish murdering, but I was game. Even spiced up beans can get boring.

Taking my time I finally cornered my victim and speared him solidly with my first shot. However, while I was totally focused on the fish, powerful waves lifted me up and dropped me onto jagged rocks. Things were confused for a moment til I got my bearings and pushed myself off again, stuffed the slimy beast into our sack and headed for shore. Off in the murky shadows I was sure I detected the deadly outline of a shark and with little effort convinced Clint to move in high speed. It took some talking on dry land before I decided that I couldn't go on being so paranoid, that it was a good day to die, that we still wanted another fish, and there was only one way to get him. Back in we go.

Clint speared our second fish, a huge one. He had to shoot it three times before it floated to the surface and we bagged it. Compared to Clint's my poor little bug hardly tipped the scales, but I remained proud of my work.

We cleaned both pescados, reserving the heads and the smaller animal for our dinner, then Ed and I proceeded to Don Alberto's to deliver the big fish as a gift along with twelve letters. We asked our old friend if he would mail them for us as we weren't planning on going to town for another ten days or so.

Two freshly killed rabbits hung from Don Alberto's rafters. He said that each morning he goes out hunting and shoots a couple of these furry creatures for food. This is interesting because even tho it is technically illegal for a Mexican citizen to own a gun, both Fernando and Don Alberto have them, probably all the local ranchers do, and they depend on their rifles as a farmer depends on his shovel. This is the tool that you use to harvest the bounty of the land. Without it life would be much more difficult if not at times impossible. And I imagine that at any instant a Mexican Federale could swoop in if he wished and arrest these gentlemen for blatantly disobeying the law. Such is the nature of the government of Mexico.

Back under the shade shelter at camp, Al came running in from the very exposed tidepools and said, "This is either the skinniest snake or the longest worm I have ever seen. You should all come and look at it." We dropped our clothes so they wouldn't get wet and followed Al across the rocks. Crouching down close to the water we could make out what looked like a red and white striped rubber band stretched between rocks in six or eight places. It was a worm and it must have been three feet long! Wow!

With such enticement we all spent time probing in various crevices and pools to see what we could see. Until Clint looked up and spotted a lone Mexican approaching along the beach from the north. He had his hat over his eyes and was staring at his toes. Oh, yes! We're naked! Oops.

By the time he was close enuf for eye contact we were all suitably covered and nothing was said. Our nudity was definitely not a common practice in this area, tho the weather was often ideal for it. But for some reason Fernando and Adelfina were able to accept us even tho they may not have understood why we would want to go around without clothes on and even tho they might not have accepted such behavior in others. We tried not to be too obvious about it, but were sometimes caught with our pants down.

Fernando stuck around and chatted with Clint for awhile. We fed him some snacks, and he was on his way.

Fish head caldo for our evening meal gave Al another opportunity to stretch his gastronomical limits. He was very delighted to pick apart the large head flopped into his bowl as a matter of course, and equally pleased to announce that he had just consumed one of the fish eyes.
"Now, Albert," Clint asked. "How did you know it was a fish eye that you ate? What did it feel like?"

"Oh, they sort of pop when you bite into them. They’re kind of crunchy like bristle," he explained.

"Mmmmm,"

Then suddenly Clint lets out a scream, "YAAAAAAAAAA!!"

"What's wrong? What's wrong?"

Holding his stomach and contorting his face, Clint was rolling around on the sand. We finally grabbed his arms and less and calmed him down enuf that the words he spoke made sense. "I just ate the other fish eye!" he choked out, and we all roared in laughter.

We have lots of mice living in or near our kitchen area. They've discovered a fairly abundant food supply for themselves. After dinner as the sky darkens we watch them skitter and bounce all over. The land crabs crawl out of their cubby holes as we light the lanterns. They too come to us for food. We hand them marooned pestiferous June bugs to eat until they can stand no more.

This afternoon I baked a chocolate fudge birthday cake and placed four matches on it for candles. In order to eat a piece everyone first had to help me sing a Happy Birthday wish for my mother and brother Rocky who were back in the U.S. No one declined that offer.

We heard some strange, spooky noises off in the distance tonight. They sounded like horses crying. We still know so little about what really goes on here.

Wednesday, November 5:

Clint and I tried more telepathy in the cool of the morning. We must be doing something right because I’m getting much better, tho we still have lightyears to go before we’ll be anywhere near proficient.

Then Al and Clint went spearfishing for half the day and brought back three fine specimens. One of them was Al’s first. I helped clean them and took the biggest over to Fernando and Adelfa’s. Clint said he saw two turtles swimming in the ocean with him, and an octopus. I sure wish I could have shared that sight.

I read and wrote all day, and was treated to a delightful dinner of baked fish steaks and potatoes. Life ain’t so bad here, you know?

Thursday, November 6:

School’s in session. Not much else going on today.

Out here in the wilderness, using only the basic cooking ingredients and rudimentary utensils that we have on hand, Kat somehow managed to fashion a large batch of the most incredibly delicious genuine stuffed ravioli noodles smothered in tangy tomato sauce tonight for dinner. This is definitely one of the top three meals we’ve eaten in camp. Hurray for Kat!

We’ve built ourselves a refrigerator. It’s actually just a crate suspended between two driftwood poles, draped with a heavy woven fabric. Originally it was supposed to work as an evaporating cooler with the cloth ends soaking in a basin of saltwater on its top. But the salt crystals left as the water changes to a gas prevent the remaining liquid from being drawn up into the fibers. In other words, it doesn’t work. However, we’ve found that a simple shaded box is adequate for our needs.

Friday, November 7:

More studying.

Ed was sitting on a bucket next to the kitchen when his roving eyes came to rest on the form that didn’t seem to blend with the tomato sauce cans in the cupboard. Closer examination exposed another edition of the colorful little snakes we’d found on our shelves before. Only this one was disfigured with a large bulge in its middle. He probably was diges-
AL AND ALBERT ON THE BEACH.
AL AND ALBERT ON THE BEACH.
ing one of our kitchen mice so we decided not to disturb him, carefully replacing the containers in their original positions. It looks like we're supporting an entire food chain on our wastes.

Saturday, November 8:

This morning Ed led us in an experiment in the mind's control over the body. While Ed talked us thru the normal awake state, alpha level, and a visualization to help us try to decrease our heart rate, his assistant kept track of and noted down the count. I did best with twenty-eight beats per minute. We don't know if this is impressive or not.

Then in the afternoon I had everyone lie down, so to their level of deepest relaxation, and I guided them on a trip thru inner space to places they had never been before. They each had the opportunity to choose the destination of their mental journey and after forty-five minutes of exploring, returned with some pretty exotic stories. Ed visited a small restaurant in New York City; Al sampled a number of back-country and mountainous regions; Clint picked up a spare body on another planet and was caught unprepared in cross-cultural misunderstandings; and Kat ventured somewhere between universes and communicated with beings in an entirely new language about subjects which seemed to make some sense to her, but not very much to the rest of us. An extremely interesting experience. I hope someday I'll get a chance to try it myself.

Quite a few sailboats have drifted across our panoramic theater the past week. We were warned that there would be a storm season and I guess it is upon us. Not beings in town we don't interact with them much. That is okay by me.

Sunday, November 9:

I opened my eyes to see Clint disappear over the sand dunes intent on nabbing us a rabbit today with his archery set. The Fernando family is invited to supper at about one o'clock this afternoon. I don't think rabbit would be a new eating experience for them, but Clint seemed to want to prove something to himself, and, I'll admit it, a little fresh meat would tickle my tongue.

Besides, who am I to say Clint's chosen activity is strange? The rest of us set off down the beach to dissect a large, partially putrefied turtle, tossed up out of the sea, in order to take his shell home with us. The idea thrilled us all the way to within six feet, when it suddenly became apparent that this rotting mass of flesh gave off an indescribably nauseating stench. Not giving up, even after realizing that we couldn't perform this operation without touching the turtle, I dug right in with my knife while Ed propped the shell up on a stick. It was necessary for me to maintain the attitude that this was only a pile of mush instead of a decaying animal, even if my nose was shouting otherwise. Perservering, we finally removed the bulk of the body and carried the carapace to a breezier spot to trim off the last of the fat and muscle. Mmmm-yech! After rinsing we decided the best place to leave this baby was right here. In a couple weeks we'll check back to see if it had dried up and aired out enuf to use for anything. Such anatomy lessons don't increase my appetite much.

We dragged ourselves back to camp after this emotionally taxing experience and helped each other take thorough baths. I still feel like I stink of turtle guts.

And poor old Clint just tumbled into camp, empty handed. Five and a half hours of hiking thru the desert and he saw three white tails dash off into the brush. Never even got to take a shot. He looks pretty depressed about it. I guess we'll have to treat our guests to beans for dinner. For us it's the third day in a row. Maybe I can hide the flavor with some sweet and sour TVP beef on cooked bulgur. A consolation is that Tuesday we set to go into town and snarf down some cold sodas and hot tacos, and
Perhaps, incidentally, fill up with water, extend our visas, and see if we received any mail.

Monday, November 10:

What a day! Two Mexican men with a rifle wandered up the beach into camp this morning. They were looking for us!

Their truck acquired its second flat tire near Don Alberto’s, and going there for assistance, he suggested they check with us to see if we had a tire pump. We did. So we modified our plans and quickly geared up to head into town today.

When we arrived at Don Alberto’s, Al, Kat, and I walked down the road to pick up a large cheese that Adelaida had manufactured. We were to sell it in a particular store for her, purchase supplies for them from a list, and return any extra change. Ours was a long hike thru beautiful treacherous desert hills to the sea at Rancho San Luis, and a return walk with a seven kilogram brick (over fifteen pounds) of queso.

Ed and Clint didn’t actually help much with fixing the tires. And they certainly were of no use when it came time to convince this nine hundred pound bull that he should really get back into the truck. In fact, the bull fought free, chased a shouting Don Alberto thru the cactus and brush for a ways, then got the ropes around his neck tangled in the vegetation. It was an hour or so before the men were able to literally throw this beast back into the truck and head on their way to town and the butcher’s.

Five letters greeted me at the post office in San Jose del Cabo. What a treat. I sat in the square and absorbed this contact with my old culture for an hour or so while the others did some shopping. We met at our favorite taco stand for spicy tamales and grapefruit. It sure is funny to watch Al’s glasses steam up after he eats one of those hot chili peppers.

Once our hunger pangs were stilled we migrated back down to the town square to do some letter writing. Soon Kat and I were surrounded with a group of about two dozen twelve year old boys who had been studying English and found this an opportune time exercise their new skills. What was amusing was the older teenagers standing off to the side of the park who really wanted to come talk with us but were too embarrassed to actually do it. They were jealous of the twelve year olds.

Once the ice was broken and we looked fairly open to conversation, the young men joined us also, and we had a good time talking back and forth in our two languages. One boy seemed especially intelligent, sensitive, and open to us. When I asked his name I found out that he was the son of Juan Pedrin who visited us at our camp one night with Abel.

This is a small world.

As it got late the crowd dissipated, and we drove out to our beach for the night.

Tuesday, November 11:

By early morning we had arrived in the town of Cabo San Lucas. Extending into the water from the nearby peninsula is a majestic natural stone arch that is the landmark which separates the Sea of Cortez from the Pacific Ocean. We wrote letters as the village woke up, ate some fresh corn tortillas with catsup for a breakfast snack, then trotted en masse into the Immigration Office. "No, we can’t do that here. In all of my ten years of faithful service in this office no one has ever asked me to do such a thing. You must go back to La Paz to extend your visas. I cannot do it here."

Without a second thought, we hopped into our trusty vehicle, and five hours later stepped into the shaded streets of the peaceful city. Walking up the stairs to the Oficina de Inmigracion, we expected further hassle, but the man behind the desk recognized and greeted us with a smile, and
when we explained our problem, he asked to see our money. We pulled out all our cash, and laid it on the counter. Uh-oh. We knew we only had enuf for a twenty day extension. I told him that we’d brought in all our food from the U.S. and didn’t need that much to live on. I don’t think that mattered. He must have just decided we were okay, because after we promised that we weren’t smoking any of that marijuana, or going naked on the beach (Our fingers were crossed on only one of these statements.) he granted us sixty days more until January 20. Whoopee! We’re free!

We agreed to each go our own way this day, and meet back in the town square in a few hours. I found a cool bench in the park to finish writing a letter to Debbie Williams, and was soon joined by a ten year old girl. She was very outgoing. We talked for a while til she had to go. It’s neat to be so easily approached and seemingly accepted by the local people here.

Clint came over, sat down, and as I wrote he struck up a conversation that must have lasted two hours. Kat and Ed moseyed over, and soon Al arrived. All joined in the talking. These were college students attending a two year technical school. When you run out of simple things to say the interaction becomes a bit more interesting. The kids told us how Mexicans could be rich like Americans, because Mexico has a huge untapped oil supply and other natural resources, but the Mexicans are lazy. We disagreed.

We’ve seen many, many Mexican people working very hard just to survive.

After some clarification we understood them to be saying more that even tho the world has a view of Mexicans being a lazy people, taking their daily siesta, that in actuality the Americans are the lazy ones because at any time of the year, in any country of the world you can find them vacationing. Mexicans must constantly work.

The boys were interested in us and in what we had to say, they were not just horsing around. By late afternoon they’d invited us to sit in on their classes tonight, and after excitedly accepting their invitation and setting directions, we split for the ferry landing to gather some information.

Come evening, we parked our truck by the school and located the principal to ask permission to attend class. He spoke English well, and explained to us how this was a fifteen day old college being held nights in these Highschool classrooms, that classes were taught only in Spanish, and that if we wished we could sit in on a session. Kat chose Mathematics while the rest of us entered a mechanics class. Now, even tho we didn’t understand half of what was said, sketches on the blackboard and the general context of the discussion let us actually learn some things about the triangle of fire, and the operation of diesel engines. It was a fascinating experience. When class was dismissed we thanked our friends and the principal, and agreed that we should try to do this sort of thing more often.

And now it’s time to eat. We chose a little restaurant that we’d spottied earlier in the day and were not disappointed. Sitting on the counter were two pie’s heads off of which the cook was carving crispy fat and chunks of Juicy meat to fill soft taco shells. We each ordered a couple. Mmmmm-mmmmm. Then Al and Clint had an idea, looked up the word for tongue in the dictionary, and returned to the table torting their new found delicacy. I conned a nibble out of them and found it to be delicious too. I’m not sure I would have believed I’d be doing this sort of eating three months ago, but in that much time you can certainly change your attitudes about a lot of things.

After reading in the park by streetlight we decided it was time for bed and drove out to our camping beach. Preparing to lay out the sleeping bags, we sadly discovered that two of them were missing. We’d left them in the back of the truck when we went to school, covered, but not locked up, and now Al and Ed are without bedding. This experience sobered us to some of the realities of life and we each thought our own thoughts.
After a while we came up with a plan to double up in bass, and since Ed was sprawled on the front seat of the truck anyway we'd give him the spare. He stubbornly refused, somehow taking the stolen bag to be a personal omen or attack. We were all pretty weirded out by the rip-off, but finally convinced Ed to use the bedroll as a blanket, and all managed to survive the night in reasonable comfort.

Wednesday, November 12:

Back in La Paz, we failed in an hour long attempt to locate an open store which sold white gas, so decided to leave for San Jose. At least we might have some mail waiting for us. But alas, the post office was closed for an official government holiday that none of the locals could explain to us. We needed to buy stamps in order to mail the letters we'd written, and found a very willing store owner who accepted our money and envelopes, and promised to send them on their way.

Exploring some nearby dirt roads which headed in the general direction of the beach we discovered a freshwater pond and jungle-like vegetation, tropical birds, and banana, mango and grapefruit trees. I'm looking forward to exploring the jungles of the mainland.

We filled our water jugs as Adela's sister's house, and were surprised to find Don Alberto there. He was in town buying food and supplies also. We still couldn't find any white gas so we thought we would try using unleaded car gasoline as a substitute fuel for our stoves.

The drive home was as bouncy as ever, but Ed, Clint, and I sitting in the front seat didn't notice so much. We sang the words to all the musical shows we could think of, and even pretended to harmonize in three parts.

On our way in we stopped to drop off tomatoes and dried feed corn as requested by Fernando.

After carrying a load of bottles and gear back to camp, we had only some partly fermented sour beans to eat, and all of us, especially Ed and Al in their new Mexican blankets, spent a shivery night. The first time I woke up was to a face full of sand as Ed grabbed his bedding and headed to the tent. I knew it was an accident, but it seemed to fit right in with the general mood of events lately. And the second time I was startled from sleep I found a crab nibbling at my finger. I tried to shoo him away but he just clung on harder. I finally had to rip him off of my hand and throw him as far as I could. That made me feel better. I don't know about the crab. Bad dreams disturbed the rest of my sleep.

This has been some trip into town.

Thursday, November 13:

The wind is back. After toting the remaining water containers to camp, we all read most of the day. Clint disappeared into the tent and didn't come out until after the sun had set. Finally sticking his head outside the flaps he said, "Where's lunch?" He must have been reading a good book.

Friday, November 14:

I carried the spear as Clint and I walked a bit south before entering the water. It's getting noticeably chillier these days. The sea was crystal clear and loaded with creatures, and tho I tried for an hour and a half I wasn't able to catch a one. On our way to a spot further south, a gigantic six foot black grouper materialized directly in front of us. I froze as he circled, giving me a look over. I glanced at my spear, and then at this two hundred pound monster fish, and decided that he might be a bigger target than the other fishes, but trying to kill this fellow with my sling would be as ridiculous as trying to stop an armored tank with a broom. I just hoped he wasn't thinking about what kind of a meal I'd make.
While regaining our body heat on the hot sand, Clint and I observed
two men in a small fishing boat attempt to maneuver thru the breakers and
rocks into the beach. They didn't make it, almost tipped over, and quickly
motored back out to open water. We wondered why they would try such a
stunt. The answer became obvious when we set off towards camp. If it was
not this new dead turtle, who's shell didn't even tempt me, then it must
have been this partially buried pile of heavy black nylon cord, yellow
plastic floats, and lead weights, a nearly new, expensive looking fishing
net that must have washed ashore. What should we do with it? What could
we do with it? Given the difficulty involved in moving the net anywhere,
we figured it would be best to simply leave it as it was.

Showers and studying occupied the rest of our day. Dinner was a
delicious fake meat pie, with granola cookies for dessert. Our granola is
stored in one of the pickle buckets. Over the weeks in the moist atmos-
phere and hot sun it has become stale and tainted with the distinctly
sour taste of dill pickles. The five of us will go to extremes to locate
or create something to eat other than our unpalatable dry cereal, and as a
result we're attempting to use it up anyway that we can. Our most com-
mon breakfast these days is hot oatmeal smeared with brown sugar, peanut
butter, dried bananas, and lumpy milk. Al really goes for those powdered
milk lumps, so we save them for him.

Another effect of the intense sunlight has been to change our hand
blown, clear glass water bottles into algae incubation tanks. We've had
to filter long stringy blobs of green fiberous plant material out of our
drinking water, and sometimes we've not done such a good job of it. Since
our alfalfa sprouts haven't grown very well, this is our only source of
fresh green in our diet, and we figure it's probably good for us. Our
Mexican guests, however, are slightly dissusted by such behavior, and tho
they've said nothing about it to us, they've taken to bringing their own
water with them to our camp. We find it humorous that the Mexicans are
finding the Americans' water unfit to drink.

But on our last trip to the water purification plant in La Paz, we
told the workers of our plight. They grinned knowingly and replaced our
clear bottles with those fabricated of dark green glass. Would this work?
At first we thought the coloring was so you couldn't see the algae inside
and would never know the difference. Later we discovered that the green
tinted bottles truly had no plant life in them. Why?

Get out the old physics book and let's find out. The reason the
glass appears green to our eyes is that the dyeing agent absorbs the red
end of the red-orange-yellow-blue-green-violet spectrum, allowing the yel-
lous, blues, and greens to pass thru and be detected as the deep green we
see. Plant leaves are green to us. They depend on the red end of the
rainbow for energizing their photosynthetic reaction, reflecting the use-
less green end back to our eyes. If the darkened glass gets the red out,
then there will be none left on the inside of the bottles for algae to use
for growth. And that's why we now have algae free water to drink! O.E.D.

Fernando trotted up on his horse just before we ate, so we invited
him to join us. He didn't stay long, and when he was about to leave, asked
us not to tell Adelfa that he had been here. We think this must be be-
cause she was trying to keep him from interrupting the studying we've told
them we must do. It's a tough situation. We just don't have enough time
here. Fernando really does care for Clint alot. Before departing he
shook Clint's hand in both of his and asked how much longer we'd be here.
"Only sixteen days," we told him. A sadness spread across his eyes.

"Will you return another year?"
"Maybe. Maybe we will. Someday."

Saturday, November 15:
The mornings are getting colder and we find this gives us reason to
stay in bed a little longer. Al and Ed have taken to sleeping in the tent
to help keep warm. The books held our attention throughout the day.

Sunday, November 16:

Breakfast was oatmeal—bananas and oatmeal—again for the sixth time in a row. It's certainly warm and filling, and in the morning when you're hungry it's still a treat.

Clint left for Rancho San Luis to go rabbit hunting with Fernando. At about ten o'clock I headed there too. I wanted to see what all was involved in the rabbit killing process. The contour of the beach is changing drastically due to the heavier seas. New rocks and caves are being exposed and the angle of the beach is increasing. I didn't know this was such an evolving landscape. How will it look just ten years from now? What was it's appearance a million years ago? The effects of time are sometimes not obvious to us, organic beings who live and die so quickly. The perspective of a three billion year old boulder would be entirely different. What does a star think about? Or a cloud of cosmic dust? Walking gives me time to ponder such things.

I arrived just as the brave hunters returned with their game. Clint had two large rabbits hanging from his hand and a rifle over his shoulder. He said it took Fernando three bullets to kill them. One of the shells was a dud. Ammunition is expensive and you can't afford to waste poorly aimed shots.

Just then two large Brahman bulls began to battle one another over Fernando's cows. Neither of these magnificent creatures even belongs here, said Fernando. One comes from Don Alberto's ranch, the other from Rancho de las Vinoramas, five kilometers north. Three ranchers had been tracking them down and after some fancy cowboy rope work and wrestling, they were able to split them up and lead them home.

Adelfa took the two rabbits to the clothes washing porch attached to her kitchen and hung them up one at a time by the neck. Using her heavy duty, all-purpose, razor sharp kitchen knife she whacked off the feet against a wooden post, then carefully pulled the skin away from the neck, slit it all the way around, and peeled off the entire hide in one piece as if it were a jumpsuit. Again, every last morsel of even slightly edible food was quickly devoured by the hungry but patiently waiting dogs. The fur coat was swallowed whole.

Next, Adelfa's adept fingers guided her blade as it unzipped the front of the carcass without scratching any of the innards. All are peeled out and tossed to the animals, except for the stomach which is reserved for cultivating suacho, the cheese harder. You also check the liver to make certain it's not green or spotted and therefore free of disease. Chop off the head, hand it to your favorite four legged friend and watch him trot off with the prize, the ears flopping out the side of his mouth. Rinse the rabbit and it's ready to cook. Less than ten minutes. We chopped it up and threw the pieces in a pot of boiling water for caldo. Clint had helped make tortillas earlier.

Ed, Al and Kat arrived. Adelfa had invited us to wash some of our clothes in her tub if we wished. It would save us a trip to town so we accepted. Adelfa got out the supplies we'd need and left me to perform the task of washing the women folk the world over. Only I didn't know how to do it, and my fake-it job didn't impress her much. What shocked her was that there was a female person who had never learned to wash clothes by hand. Unthinkable. I tried to explain that my mother always used a machine for this. I tried to imagine what my mom would have done with our washer and drier, but such things just don't exist here, and Adelfa patiently demonstrated her technique for us.

Soak all the soiled clothing in a small tub. Refill the tub with water and add soap, dumping the clothes back in and rubbing the fabrics together for awhile. Then remove each piece individually to the wash board and scrub it with a brush, adding more soap where necessary, espec-
ially to cuffs and collar. Rinse well, and hang up to dry. It was a
tremendous amount of work, yet Adelfa's family's clothes were always so
clean. I guess she got a lot of practice.

My clothes were finished. Now it was Clint's turn.

What? More stares from Fernando and Adelfa. "You mean you're not
going to wash Clint's clothes for him? That's your job."

Clint didn't help much. He teased me and insisted that I do his
laundry too. I refused, somewhat offended, and said, "Clint is strong
and needs to be well rounded in his skills. He should learn to wash his
own clothes.” Fernando felt sorry for him, but Clint attacked his greasy
pants and T-shirts with a vengeance and did a good job. He'll make some-
one a nice wife.

Adelfa told us of a Fiesta celebrating the patron saint of the nearby
town of Santa Catarina on November 25. It sounds pretty exciting with
horse races and dancing. Adelfa promised to teach us to dance Mexican
style so I could dance with her father, Fernando's brothers, and Don Al-
berto. I said, "Sure! Sounds muy interesante." We said we would drive
the whole family there and they could show us what a real Mexican fiesta
was like.

Dinner was delightful. We all felt so comfortable eating with our
friends. It felt just like home sweet home. Even Fernandito and Vira
Cruz have gotten accustomed enough to us to eat at the table.

After the men helped the ladies clean up the table, throw the scraps
to the animals, and wash the dishes, we chatted for awhile. Clint remark-
ed about the great quantity of palomas, doves, who were gathered around
the watering hole. Fernando said that a large flock of them come to drink
dawn and dusk, and that often they will kill a couple to feed to the
children. Clint asked if they used the sun. No, Fernando said, they
throw rocks. He told us that one time he killed not two, but three birds
with one stone! I don't think these people will ever cease to amaze us.

They sent the second rabbit home with us as a gift.

Monday, November 17:

Our plan for the day was studying, as usual. But, also as usual, we
were not entirely surprised when our plans were drastically altered to
deal with the situation at hand.

At about one in the afternoon, Adelfa and the kids rode into camp on
a horse whose reins were in Fernando's hands. We immediately spotted the
scared, worried look on Fernando's face and asked what was wrong, where
were they going? Fernando explained that Adelfa was hurting badly around
her neck and chest area, that it had been getting progressively worse for
the past twelve days or so, and that she hadn't slept at all last night.
Could we possibly take her to the doctor in town?

After a quick pow-wow we decided that Ed and I should lead this expedi-
tion. Clint made us two rabbit sandwiches, and after gathering a few
belongings we were on our way. Ed, myself, Adelfa and Vira Cruz sat in
the cab. Adelfa had her throw up blanket and Vira Cruz used it a few
times. Adelfa just burped a lot. The ride was as bumpy as usual and must
have been extremely uncomfortable for this woman, but she didn't complain
at all. Both Fernandos seemed to manage alright in the back of the truck.
It's a long ride, and Ed and I talked some in English. I don't think A-
delfa minded, but I still felt a little guilty. I must learn to speak
more Spanish.

We dropped them all off at the doctor's office, and went to buy some
fruit. Not very much later we met and checked in at the post office for
letters, then drove over to Adelfa's sister's house for a visit.

I can't imagine what the doctor could have done for Adelfa. I got
the impression from Fernando that it wasn't very much, yet cost them quite
a bit. But it was the only facility available to them, they had no other
choice. I hope Adelfa’s problem is not a serious one. I hope she feels better soon.

I read my mail and shared it with Ed. We were invited to come inside and were treated to candied mangos from their own trees, and some green tangerines. While busily snarfing away we overheard parts of a conversation about us in Spanish. The ladies were remarking that we were such good people, for Americans. We seem to be so well accepted here that I feel like we could return whenever we wanted and still be welcome.

During the ride home it was ruke time again. We spent fifteen minutes visiting with Adelfa’s father, a talkative old man, and finally made it back to camp. I sure like it here. I guess because it’s so peaceful. We relaxed while reading the rest of our mail, swapping tales, and enjoying the luxury of eating fresh fruit.

Tuesday, November 18:

The wind is howling today, but instead of coming from the north, as it usually does, it’s blowing from the south. Does this mean we’re in for another storm?

Thru my binoculars I’ve been watching pelicans dive into the sea head first and slurp down huge fish. It looks so easy.

Later in the afternoon Fernando sailloped into camp on his caballo, his horse. He hopped off and delivered to us a plastic wrapped package of Adelfa’s tamales. They were still hot! The best I’ve ever eaten. Chunks of pork, potatoes, peppers, and onion, all enconced in a thin corn meal shell. These were true tamales. As an added treat, Adelfa had included some chicharones, little fried meats. One of their relatives had killed a cow and had shared this with them. The pieces seemed to be sprinkled with white flecks, and didn’t look like any piece of cow we’d ever seen before. What worried us was that the name by which Fernando referred to these rubbery textured delicacies was not in our dictionary. Hunching down, we got to draw us a picture in the sand and point. Oh. Ahem. It’s cow udder, huh? Hmmmm. Muchas gracias.

Al, of course, was delighted.

The whole time Fernando was with us he looked very sad. So I asked him if he was, and he said yes. "Y por qué?" I asked. Why? He said it was because we were soon going to leave here and he would miss us. I knew he really meant this from his heart, and it made us all a little sad too.

Wednesday, November 19:

Meaty discussions, analyzing our changing world views in writing, and studying our books sent this day quickly into the past.

Thursday, November 20:

Poor Clint is sick once again. He spent the whole day moaning, groaning, and sleeping.

I prepared a meal of TVP hamburhers for lunch. Played doctor to our patient, and explored the sparkling, clear, underwater world at our doorstep. The snorkling was superb. Literally tons of fish swam easily thru this liquid world where ever I looked. Gold colored groupers, chomp, angel fish, and tens of varieties for which I have no names. A three foot long brown eel stared at us with open mouth, and I could see rows of needle sharp teeth. After Al finally got my attention I moved my fin out of its face and we stared at each other for awhile.

Al bent the spearpoint on his second shot at a fish, so we had to return to dry land for repairs.

Friday, November 21:

There’s not much to write here about our studies, but I could go on for pages trying to describe the beauty, the wonder, and the magic of this undersea world of ours. Clint was feeling much better today. He and Al
and I spent time hunting and exploring, and both Clint and I caught fish.

Lately, Fernando's mice have wandered all the way from Rancho San Luis to be with us in our camp. We've figured out that any food scraps which we can feed to these mice instead of throwing away will actually be calories going into the bodies of their owners when they are butchered. The mice have figured this out too, and often we find them asleep in piles of three or four, waiting till the next meal time. These mice are rather polite, and not bad company. And for some reason it's highly entertaining to see a mouse contentedly munching away on a fish head.

One of the real pleasures here is to wake up in the morning and take a long drink of fresh cool water before the sun comes up and makes everything tepid. We would fill a special wide mouth one gallon jug before going to sleep at night and leave it on the kitchen table so it would be all ready when we got out of bed. One such morning Clint blindly reached for this soothing refreshment and was about to drink deeply when he noticed the lumps in the bottom. Five drowned mice lay curled in our favorite water jug. Ush!

Mice tended to crawl all around our collapsible stove at night because in it we stored our leftovers and bread. All they usually found was crumbs. This night the water container sat next to the oven, and I guess the mousies couldn't tell for sure, but figured that there must be good things to eat inside and jumped in. Five drowned mice. I wonder if this could be the secret to a better mouse trap? Anyway, we didn't waste the mouse meat. We fed it to the mice. Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch.

Saturday, November 22:

You may think that all I've been doing lately is skin diving, but that's not true. I only spend half my time doing it. Clint and I went to sea and Clint speared a large turquoise colored parrotfish. But the three promised sis bounced off, a scale the size of a silver dollar stuck on one point. We decided to return to shore and replace the tip with the barbed one Clint's Mom had sent down for him. After an hour of freezing in the waves, we finally emerged with a fine specimen, a four pound spotted grouper. This was to be a gift for Fernando and Adelfa. We cleaned it, and were just about to leave for their ranch when I found a poor sick duck washed out of the sea. He was a cute little guy. I really liked him.

ODE TO A DUCK

by Clint

This morning Phyllis found a dying duckling on our beach. She brought it to camp and tried to revive it with honey-water and then some fresh caught raw fish, but to no avail. I think it died in her hands. She was moved. Later, Phyllis took a shovel and the duck to the top of a knoll almost in our camp. She dug a grave, alone, and sat for a moment pondering the non-life of the creature before her. Gently then, she picked it up, supporting its now limp head, and laid it in the pit. She was the last to see him. Al noticed Phyllis filling in the hole, and hurried to stand near her. With respect more for the human than for the bird, his readings from a make-believe bible were interrupted with dramatic sobbs. Phyllis directed her shovel fulls of sand at Al's feet. Together they constructed a cross out of driftwood and erected it over the duckling's head. Al left. Phyllis left.

After awhile, Phyllis returned to take a photograph of the scene with her camera, but it will never be as meaningful as the image she has in her heart.
Sunday, November 23:

Clint rose early and made us some tortillas for breakfast. We ate beans and cheese with them, the standard Mexican meal, then Clint set off to go hunting with his bow and arrow again. The rest of us stayed at Rancho Campo and studied.

He returned later in the afternoon empty handed, but wasn’t so depressed this time. He said he spotted Fernando doing his job as a rancher, running up and down, over and around hills, rocks and cacti, chasing cows in the hot sun. Clint made his way to Rancho San Luis, met Fernando there and went for a walk with him thru the desert. Fernando kept giving him pointers on how to move without wasting energy or twisting his knees and ankles in the soft sand. He even found a favorite edible cactus fruit for Clint to eat, who said it was red and tasted much like warm watermelon with tiny black seeds in it. When I asked Clint about rabbits, he said that he could have nailed a baby one but with the soft fur and innocent eyes, wasn’t able to shoot it. And when he told Fernando this, Fernando said that the smallest rabbits taste best. Oh, well. Sometimes you just can’t win.

Monday, November 24:

Dawn was chilly and overcast so we spent time reading. Ed taught us how to tie some easy macrame knots, then after lunch, Clint and I went snorkeling just to look. We found three nudibranchs, colorful sea slugs that closely resemble plants in appearance. But soon we were cold. We swam in and warmed ourselves with cups of hot carob and fresh out of the oven home-made bread.

The big black fishing net was still on the beach. After some discussion we decided that since we were going to town tomorrow for the fiesta we may as well tote this thing in with us and see if we can give it to one of the local fishermen. It’s certainly a valuable possession. Maybe we would even get a reward. So Clint and I dug it out of the sand and dragged it into camp on driftwood poles.

Showers for everyone in the afternoon. We wanted to be spiffy for the party, or at least not chase everyone away by our smell.

Tuesday, November 25:

The big day. I woke up Clint at five o’clock and we began to bake cinnamon rolls. Brilliant orange clouds spanning the entire horizon preceded the golden sun ball’s appearance.

It took both Kat and I to drag the net out to our truck. Once we were all loaded in we proceeded as planned to pick up Fernando’s brother at his ranch, and then Fernando, Adelfa, and the kids. All were dressed up in their finest clothes, hair greased back, shoes polished, not a speck of dirt to be seen. Oh, boy! We’re going to a fiesta! You could feel the excitement in the air.

We drove to San Jose del Cabo first, and based ourselves at Adelfa’s sister’s house. We socialized for awhile, me promising to dance with all the men there, kidding and playing around. Adelfa’s father is quite a joker. He decided he should accompany us to the fish factory while we attempted to return the net, just in case we needed a translator.

The man we spoke with was seemingly well educated, polite, and in his late thirties. He informed us that the net we found was not his, but of a special type designed for shark and tuna fish. For our good deed, tho, and because the owner who we would finally return the net to may not be as well off as he was, the fisherman said he would reward us with ten pounds of dried salted shark meat. Just sign here. Again we were impressed.

This man seemed to genuinely care about his competitors, the other fishermen, and just in case they couldn’t reward us, he would. It was hard to believe. Not only that, but we still had this huge fishnet with us. What do we do with it now?
Returning to Adelfa's sister's after doing some errands, we shared our gift with the others, then went out to eat at our little taco stand. Returning once more, we found everyone ready to leave and headed out to Santa Catarina and the fiesta, having no idea what to expect.

It's a good thing we had no expectations because the next few hours were pretty confusing and strange to us. Arriving about two o'clock, we were informed that if we paid ten pesos each, we could go to the horse races at four. Fair enuf. We paid up and began to wait amongst the huge milling crowd. Much cerveza was being drunk. The men were bunching with womenfolk, and the women and children clumped together in their own small groups. Soldiers in uniform, armed to the teeth with automatic weapons strolled around keeping the peace. And we waited some more. Finally a starting pistol was fired and way off in the distance we could make out two horses galloping at breakneck speed for the crowd. A tremendous roar flung itself from the throats of a thousand people as the animals shot past us, and that was the end of the horse races.

Staying close to Fernando and Adelfa, we moved with the mob towards the center of town and as the sun set found ourselves in the home of one of Fernando's brother. We could tell it was his brother because the two of them look almost identical. So we sat down and chatted, met lots of new people, ate some delicious tamales, waited another two hours, and at last last headed for the fiesta arounds basketball court. The women are all gathered here to watch their children put on skits with twenty minute intermissions between each one, while the men are hanging around in groups in the street buying and drinking beers. We just sort of watched, taking it all in, not saying much. Some of the plays were cute.

As nine o'clock rolled around, the stage end of the lighted, paved court was cleared and a regular looking electrified band began to set up their equipment. Microphones, amplifiers, drum set, speakers, electric piano. Where are the mariachis? Still we said nothing.

The band began to play Mexican rock music. So this is a fiesta, eh? They even sang "Suzy Q." in English. This kind of get together is a very formal courting opportunity for all the young gentlemen and ladies, and you could see the anxious tensions in the air. We were all sitting on the hillside overlooking the dance floor and could watch everything that was going on. So could the police and the army men.

I got bored and began talking to the man sitting next to me. He seemed fairly intelligent and we had a very decent discussion about hippies in America and hippies in Mexico. He told me that the reason we were stared at so often was because of the strong prejudices that Mexicans hold against both white and black people. It was true that I don't recall ever seeing a black person in Mexico. Could this be why? I helped him with his English and he helped me with my Spanish, and it was a good time.

Then Fernando and Adelfa handed Clint and I each a sleeping child and together they walked to the pavement and began to dance. They kept urging Eddie to go find a partner and join in the fun, so finally Ed and I got out there and did the Assie Shuffle, a favorite dance of ours that we just made up. Everyone loved it. Ed is a good leader. But fate stepped into Ed's life and when he sat down to take a rest, RRRRIIP! His pants tore completely up the rear. Ed could dance no more.

Next it was Clint's and Al's turn. Kat and I dragged them out onto the floor and moved thru a slow dance. Clint kept stepping on my feet. Maybe Eddie could give us dance lessons at camp. While Clint and I continued moving to the music, Al got involved in a discussion with some older teenagers who, so Fernando told us later, were calling him all kinds of bad names behind his back.

I asked a handsome, tall Mexican to dance with me, and after the ice was broken I was swamped with offers, but I didn't want to be their partner. I really only enjoy dancing with friends.
It was getting late and we all decided it was about time to leave. As we headed towards the street, the guys Al had been talking to followed us, murmuring to themselves. A half a block up the darkened roadway Fernando suddenly tossed his son into Clint's arms, whirled around and moved towards the hasslers, speaking to them quietly but very intently. He told them that if they didn't leave us alone he would call to his many relatives and the police and they would be sorry. Clint saw what was happening, handed Fernandito to me, and dropped back to show some muscle if needed. It wasn't. Fernando returned to us saying that there was no problem. Just some bad persons picking on Al and the rest of us for being Americans.

Fernando said that his father taught him to beware of the many bad people both in the United States and Mexico, and that anyone who doesn't like Americans just because they are Americans he doesn't like. Instead of being embarrassed to be with us when the girls with make up on snickered at the way we were dressed, he told us that he doesn't respect people who judge others by looks or clothing. They are fools. He bases his love and respect for others on their goodness, no matter what color their skin or how they are rated by the norms of society. Adelfa added in that that was why they liked us, they could count on our friendship and help when they needed it, and we accepted their friendship and help in return. She also added that they will miss us very much.

I wanted to know how Fernando and Adelfa could understand us so well when our Spanish was so poor and they understood little or no English. Adelfa said that she listens very closely to the tone of our voice and can hear the meanings we are trying to express. Her intuition is what she responds to when she answers our questions, more than what we actually say. We're going to miss them too.

We all piled into the truck and drove our way thru the crowded streets then down the road to Adelfa's sister's house for the night. We were divided up by sexes. Kat and I shared a bed inside next to Adelfa and the two children, while the men had to take a mattress out to the truck and sleep there with three blankets to share between them. The night air was nippy so they wore all the clothes they had. Ed curled up in the cab while Al, Fernando, and Clint snuggled together in the truck bed. All turned out well until those heartless roosters sang out their not always welcome songs quite early. Ah, yes. The idea of a big pot of chicken soup sounded pretty tempting. It would solve two problems at once, halting the racket and filling my empty belly.

Wednesday, November 26:

This place has the best flush toilet that we've yet discovered in Baja California. It really works! It had better work with six families all depending on it.

Clint and Al took off to do some shopping while Ed, Kat and I wandered around doing little odds and ends, investigating the collection of nicknacks that these people, all people, collect and place about their dwellings. We even were invited for breakfast, a tasty meal of boiled beans, tortillas, and cheese, served very formally. This is the equivalent of our cold cereal with milk and sugar and orange juice, only probably much better for you.

Clint and Al returned, but Clint became very mysterious and said he'd made a deal with a man and had to go back to meet him in thirty minutes. So we stuck around and waited for him, and when he returned saying nothing at all, we headed for home, thanking Adelfa's relatives for their hospitality.

We did some visiting on our return journey. The first stop was at Adelfa's brother in law's house, the mechanic who fixed our Chevy. We wanted to pick up a couple of old tires so Fernando could show us how to make the sandals he wore so comfortably, and which seemed so ideal for
life on the beach. It seems that every time I enter a Mexican hut, the woman there, no matter how young or old she is, will be stirring up a pot of food with three or four kids tagging on to her apron strings. I’m not sure this would be the life I’d want to lead, but it seems common around here.

And as we drove down the road it seemed that every house we passed either Fernando or Adelfa wanted to stop at to visit with the people they knew there. Adelfa’s father was in, was happy to see us again, and gave us a loaf of cheese to take along. Don Alberto bestowed upon us a present of eggs and cheese. These people are so giving. There appears to be an uncommonly cheerful understanding between these families, and thru Fernando and Adelfa, they have now accepted us as their friends and neighbors. This understanding includes the habit of sharing whatever luxuries the universe might bless them with among all those around them. If one family cuts up a pig, then they share it with all their friends. There’s also a practical side to this behavior. Without refrigeration, fresh meat quickly spoils, and it’s not easy to devour an entire cow in three days. So if you pass around everything you can’t immediately use, then others will return the favor, and besides being a pleasant social activity, you have a relatively constant supply of good food.

They’re grading our road! Now that we only have five days left at our isolated oasis, a large bulldozer is plowing its way thru the ruts and crevices and making the road almost passable. I guess it will be a smooth ride out.

As we drove off our neighbors, they said that because we were leaving, and because they knew we celebrated some holiday about this time of year where we commonly ate a big meal, they wanted to invite us over for a feast next Friday. If we would participate, they would kill one of their pigs.

"Hueiros amigos, los puercos?” we asked. Our friends, the pigs?
"Si."
"Pobre puercos!” Poor piggy. But, yes, we accept. Thankyou very much.

We finally walked around the last bend to camp - it certainly is a long way from the garage to the livingroom in this place - and discovered that our friends the pigs had knocked over the pickie bucket containing our total supply of flour, and ate every last cupful. And the mice had somehow worked their way into the refrigerator, chewed thru some tin foil, and sored themselves on our only loaves of bread. Looks like we won’t be eating any baked goods for awhile.

It’s late afternoon and we’re all exhausted. We tried to do a small amount of exercise by running, swimming, or doing rolls, but eventually all ended up crashed on our beds, dead to the world.

Tonight instead of anyone cooking we are going to devour the contents of a giant care package that my Dad sent to me. Hurray for canned food.

Thursday, November 27:

Clint, Ed, and I wanted Fernando to teach us how to make huarachis, Mexican sandals. We hiked over early in the morning and following greet- ings, set about slicing out the tire’s circular steel beads. Clint had brought an X-acto knife with him and Fernando was really impressed at how easily it cut thru the resilient black rubber.

After laying open the tire, we hacked off two chunks each, slightly longer than our feet. Tracing around our heels and toes, Fernando guided our hands as we sketched four flaps of the proper dimensions. These pads, when rounded, drilled, and correctly fitted, fold up around the foot to support the laces and keep the sandal from falling off. For leather, Fernan- do cut strips off of a hide he’d had tanned from the skin of a deer he
had killed several years before. A treasured material that he freely shared with us. And boy, is that guy ever skilled with his knife.

When I was finally done, I discovered that I had built for myself two beautiful left footed huarachis. Oh, no. Clint started to also until he saw my mistake. I think Fernando was more worried about it than I was. He put quite a bit of effort into fashioning an extra flap out leather for me, dying it black, and fitting it to the side of my sandal. It took all day for us to complete them, but we walked home that afternoon proud owners of official, handcrafted, Mexican footwear. Somehow we felt more respectable now.

Tomorrow is the big Thanksgiving feast at Rancho San Luis. There was a sadness in Fernando's brown eyes as he sincerely asked us if we really were leaving soon, if we really had to go. It will indeed be difficult to pick up all our belongings and remove ourselves from this desert paradise and these warm, wonderful people. Maybe we won't do it. But inside I know we must, tho I don't know why.

I cooked until late to prepare for the next day's party. And I think of that poor little piggy, silently tied to a fence post near Fernando's kitchen. I am sure he knows that his fate lies in our stomachs.

Friday, November 28:

Fernando said to be there early, so we cut the dreaming short, watched a beautiful sunrise, and took off almost immediately. With us we brought cabbage to fry, two pots of beans, and two pans of my famous shilok. Fernando was hunched over the piedra de filo, sharpening his tools as we walked into Rancho San Luis. This is it folks. The five of us were feeling very sober. After all, these missies had been our friends, our private mobile garbage cans. Now, by our own hands, one of them was about to become our dinner.

The victim was asleep. Fernando stealthily snuck up to her and grabbed a hind leg. She began to squeal. Adelfa held her mouth shut so she couldn't bite, then signaled for Al and Clint to lift her rear legs up in the air. Did we really want to partake of this? It's too late now.

Fernando began to jab the poor pig in the chest, trying to sever a major artery in the heart. This was a new technique for him, recommended by one of his brothers. Only, Fernando was a little unclear about it; he was stabbing on the right side instead of the left. Bubbling thick red globs of blood oozed out of the wound and into the bucket Adelfa was carefully holding in order not to waste any of this precious food, but the heart was still intact and the pig refused to die. Ten full minutes of painful squirming and grunting was enuf to force Fernando to think of something else. He left the anesthetized animal in the hands of Adelfa, Clint and Al, trotted into the house, and returned with an axe. One well placed whack in the head knocked her out cold, and we all took a sigh. This was setting a little too heavy for us. Fernando apologized. He said maybe next time he'd stick to the old method of slitting the throat.

We gingerly carried our deceased friend into the workporch area and laid her on a cutting table. Then the work began. Buckets of boiling water poured over the burlap bags on her side helped loosen the hairs so we could pull them out. After about forty five minutes the pig was bald and had no toe nails. Next we gently peeled off all of the skin and fat which varied in thickness from one quarter to one inch, and cut it into strips and pieces, dumping them all into a large kettle. Placed over a campfire these slimy white pieces of fat began to sizzle and pop. This is how you make chicharones and render lard for cooking purposes.

Back on the workporch we removed all of the organs including a stomach that was the size of a football. It was amazing to see how clean looking, colorful, and well organ-ized (!) this complex biomechanism was. The intestines were so neatly packed and shiny. Finally we proceeded to
dismantle the remainder of the body, tossing the smaller pieces into a pot with potatoes and onions for caldo.

By now we were beginning to get a little hungry, and the first of the fried pork rind was ready to sample. It had been four or five hours already since the killing. Our stomachs had settled down a bit. Care to try a piece? Here, sprinkle on a little salt. Careful, they're still hot. Hmmm. Not bad. Pretty good actually. I think I'll have another.

In a short while the soup was done, and how did we snap down. The standard meal of tortillas, beans, and rice always tasted so marvelous and healthy, and accompanied by boiled pork it was divine. We sucked on the bones, licked our fingers, and were so stuffed that we all had to take a siesta. Kat slept on the beach with the cows beneath an overcast sky, and the rest of us relaxed, and made plans for our future trip.

An hour or two had slipped by. Adelfa asked us if we'd like to make tamales with her. How could we resist? Only she was low on corn husks to wrap them in. It didn't take long for us to figure out that we could improvise using aluminum foil, and Al volunteered to trot back to camp to get it. While he was gone we began chopping vegetables and carving all of the little pieces of meat off of the bones. At one point, Fernando gently came up behind me, tapped me on the shoulder, and wanted me to look at his hand. As his fingers opened up, there, peering up at me, were both of the pig's eyeballs. Yech! We all laughed. But wait a minute! Let's not waste them. In great detail we described Al's recently developed fetish for consuming obscure anatomical components, and suggested with a bit of a gleam in our eyes I must admit, that we wrap these pig eyes in a specially marked tamale and feed it to him as a surprise. It was done.

Our second meal of the day was, if anything, even more fantastic than the first. We weren't even really astonished when Al actually enjoyed eating his special tamale. The rest of them were so delicious that his couldn't have been too bad. After a dessert of our special refried bean spice cake, we brought out some gifts for Fernandito and Vira Cruz. Writing paper and pencils, and a book of children's stories in Spanish.

And this was our last supper. Tomorrow we pack up and Sunday we leave. Today's experience with Fernando and Adelfa and the pig was a crown jewel in our treasure of memorable interactions here. We will never forget it for the rest of our lives. Yet now we must move on. We are drawn away from this paradisical oasis of simple living by the call of a new adventure. Yet once we depart we can never return here again. It might be physically possible, but the situation would be different. And all that will remain of these wonderful times are wisps of recollections and perhaps a scar or two. Such is the nature of change.

There was not much to say about this. Just a reluctance among us all to let these magical times go into the past. So we sat long in silence as the dark and cloudy sky mirrored our emotions, threatening to rain.

Finally, we had to leave.

Saturday, November 29:

Today we took the whole camp apart, dividing it all up into piles of food, equipment, and personal supplies for traveling, and the same for taking back to the U.S. Anything useful that we didn't absolutely need we planned to give to Fernando, the rest we burned. I carried an armload of trash over to the fire pit and set a match to it, sat down and stared into the flames. Ed came and joined me. Soon everyone was there. We added wood, Ed strummed his guitar, and we thought silent thoughts together around the last campfire on our beautiful beach by the sea......

Sunday, November 30:

The nearly forty mile an hour winds literally blew us out of bed this morning. It's like the sand is already trying to erase all traces of our stay here. We drank water for breakfast and then attacked the job of car-
ryng gear back out to the truck. Fernando said he would help us with a burro, but we thought maybe he forgot.

"How could we be so untrusting??"

Fernando was really hurt when he saw that we'd started to haul the gear by hand. He wanted us to know we could depend on him, truly. He thought we wanted him there in the afternoon and here he was showing up early at eleven o'clock. We were certainly glad to see him too. We'd forgotten what a task it was moving crates. Perhaps this Mexican peasant could show us how to do the job right. We weren't displeased.

Along with Adelfa and the kids on horseback, Fernando was accompanied by two sturdy little burros. It took maybe an hour and a half, and two tries for these beasts to accomplish what it had taken the five of us four utterly exhausting days to do when we arrived. "Es facil!" Fernando said. It's easy! It certainly was, with the aid of those two compact haversacks. No machine outside of a tank could have worked its way over sand dunes, around rocks, and up the steep winding trail to our car toting a load of cargo like these donkeys could. Thankyou Fernando! Thankyou Asno!

The truck was completely loaded by two o'clock. Adelfa had brought some of her excellent tortillas and hand-made cheese, and I opened a care-package can of Halvah. Together we ate in silence; then made one final walk back to say goodbye to Rancho Campo. We gave Fernando and Adelfa stacks of plastic containers and leftover pickle buckets; our collapsible stove, and an assortment of grains. But best of all they liked the gift of our pearly yellow plastic toilet seat.

Clint finally made his move. The big clandestine business deal he'd made in town was with a hardware store owner who trusted him enough to go to the local black market and procure a box of twenty-two caliber rifle shells. This was the secret, and this was the gift Clint now handed to Fernando. That small package of bullets would, with Fernando's markanship, provide his family with fifty rabbit dinners. It was a pleasure to be able to help our friends in this way.

And then we bade them farewell.

"Vía con dios, amigos." Go with God, our friends.

"Y ustedes." And you.

I hardly remember walking back to the truck.

Under the fig tree Al's car wouldn't start; but we were so dazed from the fact that we were actually leaving our home and friends, and so accustomed to dealing with car problems that we jumped started it almost without thinking from the battery in the Toyota. And we were off, bounce, bounce.

We dropped off small loaves of our refried bean cake and said adios to both Don Alberto and Adelfa's father on our way out. By the time we arrived in San Jose del Cabo it was quite dark. Still, there was plenty of time to eat spicy tacos with our friend the taco vendor, and snack down banana splits while talking with the ice cream lady before taking in a double feature at the movie theater for forty eight cents a piece. Now we may not have understood all the words, but it was obvious that the sleepy fat American farm owner was the bad guy.

We thought we would drive thru the jungles to the beach instead of halfway to Cabo San Lucas as usual. But we got lost on the curvy dirt roads and Al's low rider smacked into a rock and dropped its muffler. Al chose to sleep with his car and the rest of us drove out to the campsite with which we were familiar. The heavy cold winds forced Ed into the cab for the night and nearly blew the rest of us away.

Monday, December 1st:

Early this morning we rescued Al, reassembled the clamp on the exhaust pipe of the Chevy, collected mail, left a forwarding address and located Abel Olaches's house in town. He was home and we thanked him for allowing us to park our cars under his fig tree. We wished we could have
succeeded in having him over for dinner, but it just never worked out. He told us that he was glad to be of service, and to be sure to give his greetings to Susan Wellbanks for him.

By eleven thirty we headed north, Clint and I as passengers in the front seat of the truck. It was a long drive and we were still tired. Heads nodded over. I drifted off to sleep on Ed’s shoulder, Clint on mine, and it was all warm and cozy till I felt something wet on my arm. Sitting up I discovered that Clint was droolins on me. Alright, fellas. Enuf of this.

Once in La Paz we purchased small loaves of white Mexican bread to munch on, returned our bottles to the water purification plant for a refund of the deposit we’d paid, and then discovered that the ferry to Mazatlán didn’t leave until the following day.

Assessing the situation it was determined that with our stinking bodies, filthy clothes, and bedraggled hair, we were a mess, and maybe we could do something about it. Searching the outlying areas we located a trailer park where the attendant charged us forty cents a piece for unlimited use of his showers. A deal! Peeling off our clothes and stuffing them in washing machines, we all gathered in the men’s shower room so we could share shampoo and soap. Oh...I can’t even begin to describe this new wonderful sensation of soap that actually lathers, of HOT fresh water pouring over our heads. So this is what it feels like to be clean! I must be three shades lighter.

Waiting for our clothing to dry we ate corned beef, tomato, pickle, and lettuce sandwiches, and felt very contented and sleepy. Of course we chose the greasiest beach around to spend the night on. It didn’t seem to matter much tho.

Tuesday, December 2:

This morning in town we ate some breakfast, got car permits for entering Mexico proper, waited an hour in front of the bakery to pick up some more bread, and watched an artist at work on his painting. Getting anxious we drove out to the ferry dock only to park our cars in a long line and wait another three hours. While relaxing in the sunlight, a fifty year old man was wandering around investigating who else was in line with him. We began to talk and I was attracted to his lifestyle and way of thinking. He was healthy, intelligent, strong willed, and was dedicated to remaining vital and alive, constantly moving around and striving to gain new understandings. Years of experience have made him confident that he could build or accomplish anything he set out to do. After raising a son and daughter with those same attitudes, he finally had to leave his wife because she chose to grow old instead of continuing to live life to its fullest. His daughter, he said, also chose that path and is now married with a family, supported by her husband. It was fun to talk with this guy. I could just feel the energy and love of life whirling thru him. I hope that when I’m fifty years old I’m as invigorated and free of the rut as this man appears to be.

The line of cars began to move and we eventually found ourselves parked deep within the ship’s hull. The loudspeakers announced that we could neither stay in nor return to our cars once on our way, so we had to quickly grab food, sleeping bags, and something to keep us busy before we hiked up the many flights of stairs to the passenger deck. Excitement surged thru us as our mighty vessel gained speed and pointed her bow towards a distant shore, however as soon as we hit open water our stomachs crinced. This terra firma wasn’t so firm, tillting and rolling from side to side with the ocean swells. Kat immediately puked and felt much better and Ed found a place to curl up and try to forget these queasy sensations. Pretty soon we all joined him and slept for a couple hours.

It was black outside when we woke up hungry. Finding an empty table we assembled some liverworst sandwiches, sat back, and read or wrote for
awhile, till the urge to sleep again overtook us. Things were going pretty smoothly and I thought I'd be able to rest peacefully till I was startled into alertness by whispering sounds pouring out of the twisted mouth of a short, deformed Mexican, complete with a lump on his back, stooped over next to my head. "Speak up," I said. "I can't hear what you're saying."

He sat down next to me and began to ask me about myself; so we talked for awhile, the old man sitting on my other side joining in too. I thought I was doing pretty good with my Spanish, but then this short guy started to whisper again, only this time I understood what he said. He wanted to sleep with me. Yum. I told him no thank you, I was tired and was going to sleep by myself now, but he persisted. Just then Kat came over and I very cleverly left her to deal with the situation, exited stage left and found a more private place to sleep. I never found out how she got rid of them.

About one in the morning a drunken woman entered the lounge area, lay down, and with no consideration for the fifty other people trying to rest, began laughing and talking in a loud rude voice. After it became apparent that she wasn't going to stop, our friend the fifty year old bellowed, "Silencio!" The woman halted mid sentence, then took this as a challenge and continued even more viscerally. And the verbal battle began. Back and forth they went, till others couldn't resist and had to throw in their two pesos worth.

This is ridiculous! Clint and I picked up our sleeping bags and moved to the rear of the cabin. With jackets over our heads we were finally able to conk out.

Wednesday, December 3:

It dawned grey and foggy. The ferry was due to and sending out tremendous blasts with its fog horn. Within a half hour a small power launch zipped in on the resounding sails; pulled along side us and a lone man came aboard. Who could this be, a spy? Oh, I bet it's a pilot intimately familiar with the coast line who has come to guide us into port.

Yer. Down to the cars, out of the steel whale's belly, and into the busy streets of the beautiful seaport of Mazatlan. Exploring the city we saw many fine statues commemorating war heroes, a common sight in Mexican towns, magnificent churches, a huge market place, and many white sandy beaches. After asking around we located a place to store Al's car while we went traveling in the Toyota. The large building used to have a roof but it was neatly removed by the hurricane which brushed by here a number of weeks ago, the same one that caused such a storm on our beach. Other destroyed buildings and toppled trees were still visible around Mazatlan marking its path.

We washed both cars, and then built a wooden frame in the truck bed over which we could tie the blue and gold tarp to make a waterproof shelter. Again we used beer cans as an important component of our structure. They were ideal when flattened out for fastening the top beams to the roll bar. This vehicle was going to be our new home for the next month or so. We had to make it liveable. After packing it with the five personal gear pickel buckets, plus sleeping bags, food, stove, fuel, and water, there was just enuf room in the back to seat two passengers. We had it planned that should we ever have to camp in the rain, the old kitchen table top supported on two by fours resting across the truckbed, would form a double decker bunk on which we all could sleep, sheltered. Are we ready for the road? Yes!

After taking in a few more city sights and stopping at the market, we drove north of town to a paved, lighted, but otherwise empty street which extended into the sand dunes of the beach, and set about preparing a dinner of shark meat tacos.

Later on, Clint was sitting alone under a street lamp writing a letter. The rest of us were sleeping either on the beach or in the back of
the truck. A van had pulled up across the street and shared our campsite for the night. About ten thirty an old grey Cadillac with no mufflers turned into our cul-de-sac and rumbled towards us. Clint figured they were some sort of low rider types and paid no attention. Till they stopped directly in front of him, flung open the doors, and leapt out. Four Federales, two of them cradling fully automatic machine guns, flashed a badge, announced that they were "Special Police," and unceremoniously pushed Clint up against the car, frisked him, made him empty his pockets, and searched his day pack.

Clint's first powerful urge when all this happened was to run for his life, but lucky for him he was able to get control of himself and remain calm. I'm sure these gunmen would have been more than happy to blast a running suspect to smithereens, especially if he was a gringo.

They found nothing. We had nothing for them to find. No firecrackers, switch-blades, marijuana, or alcohol. Not even any beer or dirty magazines. How dull. So they woke up the people in the van and repeated the performance, but again were disappointed, tho the van campers said they were now missing a knife. Locating no contraband, the police noisily departed, presumably in search of more lucrative prey. We'd heard of these licensed roving bands of armed Federales. About this time of year they become more active in their "law enforcement" activities in order to "earn" a little extra cash or appropriate fine trinkets for gifts during the upcoming holiday season. All in the spirit of Christmas, you know.

When Clint finally wanted sleep he dragged his bedroll out to the beach and joined Kat and I. He stood over our heads and woke us up announcing in a deep Mexican accent, "Special Police. You are under arrest!"

Thursday, December 4:

We were hungry enough to eat pickle flavored granola and lumpy milk for breakfast, then set off to find a post office to buy stamps and mail the latest batch of letters, a lumber yard for a couple pieces of wood to complete our mobile shelter, and the XERZ radio station where we'd heard we could send a message to the people we'd left behind in Baja California, if they were listening. The announcement read, "Greetings to our friends Fernando, Adelfa, Vira Cruz, and Fernandito. The butterflies here are very dangerous, but with the help you gave us we can handle them okay. No problem, it's easy. Thankyou very much for everything. Until later, Phyllis, Ed, Kat, Al, and Clint." After broadcasting our message they planned to play a popular song entitled "Crazy Butterflies." We were pleased.

Let's go south.

Hours of zooming down smooth paved roads, the wind swhooshing thru our hair was a pleasant change from the slow bouncy rides with which we were so familiar. This new style of living looked as if it would be rather relaxing. We could lay back and watch the lazy towns float past us, all the new species of vegetation, and partake of the foods and culture of the varieties of Mexican people with whom we came in contact. Yes, this is the life.

Lord Murphy had other ideas, however. The Toyota's engine began overheating, loosing power, and sounding poorly. We pulled off to the side of the road to let her cool down, made some fervent wishes that nothing was really wrong, and added more water to the radiator even tho no leak was apparent for the previous water to have disappeared thru. She started up again okay, whew, but got hot almost immediately. Nuts.

Well, folks, looks like we camp here for the night. We explored the area a little. Clint meditated. Got out a lantern and whipped up something to eat. Soon a farmer and his two daughters walked up. We held a very informative discussion with this intelligent man. He grows corn and beans, and has eight children. We all enjoyed the pleasant talk.
Tonight we thought we'd try out our new bunk bed. It was a little tight with the five of us, a warm night, abundant in mosquitos. We were just itching for the sun to rise.

Friday, December 5:
So what do we do with this little car of ours? Something is definitely wrong. The map shows there's a small city back up the road just a ways. Acaroneita. I guess that's all the farther we're going to get right now.

We chugged into town, asked for the nearest garage, and lucked out. The mecanico we found was a respected calm man in his late thirties. He had several assistants working for him in this enclosed courtyard. They all called him Maestro, teacher. We described our problem to him and he said he could fix it for us. He thought we might have a blown head gasket. So we waited a bit, and pretty soon el Maestro and his students gathered around and began tearing apart the motor. All we could do was hope that they remembered where the parts and pieces went when it came time to put this baby back together again, because we certainly didn't know.

The Maestro was correct. We did have a blown cylinder head gasket. You could see the holes where cooling water had leaked into the oil, and that was why the oil had boiled and steamed when we dripped some on the hot engine. However, our ace mechanic had some bad news for us. He did not have a new head gasket in stock for us and we were unlikely to find one in town. Plus it was highly recommended that we get the cylinder head milled flat again before re-assembling the engine and the closest place that we could get that done was in Tepic, eighty miles or so south of here. And there was one more thing. He couldn't put the engine back together himself without a handbook that stated exactly how firmly and in what order the head bolts were to be tightened.

"Uh, yes. Thank you very much. Do you think it would be okay for us to camp out in your lot here for a few days?"

"Of course," he said.

Now what?
After some quick discussion we decided to send Clint by bus to Tepic with the cylinder head. While there he could get it milled and see if he could find us the proper Toyota head gasket and engine manual. By the way, how do you say "head gasket" in Spanish?

Empecue de cabeza.

Good. Well, there's no better time than the present. We sent Clint off in the bus carrying the thirty pound aluminum cylinder head wrapped in a pink blanket for protection. It looked like he was holding a baby in his arms. How cute. Clint's sleeping bag and a tarp were in his daypack.

Wandering into the town square we purchased some tacos and attempted conversation with the local friendly people. It seems that even if you just try to speak Spanish here the people respect you and are quite willing to be helpful and friendly, but if you don't try, they assume you are like every other American tourist gringo and ignore you with disgust. So we tried our best. A Senor Martinez took a liking to us and gave us a fun tour around his town.

One evening we decided to write letters in the town square. The school is right across the street from us next to the church. We'd been there a couple hours and the sky was almost dark. Our stomach's began to let us know that they were interested in finding something to eat. We were about to give in because nothing much else was going on, when all at once the church bells began to ring, water spurted up from the dry fountain, colored lights came on all over the park, and a man emerged thru a secret door in the floor of the bandstand. It was like the bell struck midnight and all the fairies came out to play.
As usual, the young children were the ones who succeeded in getting us involved. A small boy was practicing with his soccer ball, and somehow we all ended up playing with him and a very rambunctious little girl who joined us. It was great. Over a hundred Mexicans sitting on benches around the plaza talking formally in groups, or properly promenading around the square, and here we are running around chasing and kicking this silly ball with the children. But once we tired of the same and sat down we were swamped with townfolk who figured we couldn't be that bad and wished to find out more about us.

An hour or two later when Al and I really were getting hungry it was easy enough to discover the whereabouts of Kat and Ed. They were smack in the middle of a crowd of youngsters as big as ours. Everywhere we went that evening we had a parade of people following us. Pretty amusing.

At one point I was talking with a bright-eyed young girl who's name was Rosa Maria. She seemed to understand our situation, felt sorry for us, and invited us all to stay at her parents' house. That sounded better than another night on the greasy dirt at the garage. But when we began to discuss the details of sleeping bags and blankets, she got mixed up, and we ended up next to the truck anyways. Oh, well.

Saturday, December 6:

We spent the morning preparing a huge brunch of rolled cabbage leaves stuffed with a TVP ham filling. After savoring to our hearts content, we returned to the square for reading and coconut ice cream. Kat and I were approached by a fainly dressed dude who spoke English. He was born in Spain, lives in Guadalajara, and asked if we'd like to drive to the beach with him. Since we'd heard it was beautiful and had nothing else going, we snatched Al and accepted the invite. The beach is huge, long, flat, and nearly waveless, and for these reasons it is sought out as a resort. Coco palms infested the quaint villages located on the edge of estuaries which were the home of many a blue heron. We spent a peaceful afternoon wandering around, and by the time we got back to Acaponeta, Clint had returned. He was a little worried about what had happened to us all. We left behind no notes.

With Clint's update, our situation is now like this. Our cylinder head is ready to be remounted, but we have no gasket. There probably isn't a Toyota head gasket in all of Mexico because they don't make Toyotas here. Volkwagens and Datsuns, yes. But not Toyotas. So let's think of something else. But thinking on an empty stomach isn't very fun. The vendors are beginning to open up their stands. We probably shouldn't pass up an opportunity like this to continue our education and experience of Mexican cultural amenities. Why don't we eat now and think later?

OBay. (A pronunciation we all picked up from Ed.)

Later turned out to be tomorrow. We all got deeply involved in such activities as sampling pig tongue tacos. You walk around till you find a cart laden with the spread-eagle crispy brown corpse of a pig that has been roasting all day in the oven of the local bakery, and make your request. The vendor takes another look at you who don't seem to be quite the usual gringos, reaches in and rips out the aforementioned organ, chops it to bits with long-practiced strokes of his blade, and slips the savory chunks into a steaming corn tortilla with a little cabbage, tomato, and if you dare, salsa picante, hot sauce. Next?

We're becoming more accustomed to our grimy black bed. That's good because we may be here for awhile. We'd decided, at last, to follow our original time schedule which gave us only four weeks to travel and explore the Mexican Mainland. Every day we spent here in Acaponeta fanagling with the car was one day less of traveling. But what else could we do? It's okay that we've at least partially adopted the Mexican time schedule. Quite often that we have to use it.
"AND WHAT IS IT LIKE IN AMERICA?" (KAT, ED, CLINT, AND FRIENDS)
"AND WHAT IS IT LIKE IN AMERICA?" (KAT, ED, CLINT, AND FRIENDS)
Sunday, December 7:

Alright! Planning time again. Here's what we can do.

1) Bus someone to the closest American city, probably in Arizona, and have them buy the gasket and handbook we need. This would cost around fifty dollars, and have a pretty good chance of success, but it would take three to four days to accomplish.

2) Bus someone to Guadalajara, a really big city, and try there. This had a great chance of failing, and would leave us right back where we were now.

3) Try something like call up Clint's parents, have them buy us the parts in Los Angeles and hand them to a passenger boarding a plane for, say, Mazatlan, where we could bus one of us to meet them there. This would only cost the bus ticket and phone calls, provided the Callahans were willing, and if we started now we might be ready to drive out of here by tomorrow night.

What do you think? How about if we give this plan number three a try? Anyone interested in a quick trip to Mazatlan? I naively volunteered. Okay, that's settled. Now the first thing we have to do is get in touch with Mr. Callahan back in the United States. They do have phones here, don't they?

We first tried Rosa Maria's house. We were immediately invited in and ended up talking with the whole family. The mother who was sixty-five years old asked if any of us played the piano. I said that I did a little. She sat me down at an ancient upright, and I pecked out a tune rather miserably, but everyone still clapped. Then she took my place and boy, was she ever good. We laughed and talked, almost like long time acquaintances. Only as an aside were we finally able to bring up the important topic of telephones. Oh, telephones? Well, the only place you can make long distance calls is at la Oficina de Larga Distancia on the other side of town.

Okay. Efficient telephone communications was a critical element to the success of our plan. When we peered in the Long Distance Telephone Office and saw the disinterested woman who was to be our sole link with the phones, we realized that this plan might not be as simple to execute as it originally seemed. However, by five o'clock we'd spoken with Clint's Dad, and he said he would do his part, calling us back in Acapulco tomorrow to give us the flight number and description of the person holding our parts. Alright!

Clint, Alberto, and I struck out for the pig tongue taco stand, and then we all played in the plaza. A whole new array of vendors open up for the Sunday night crowd, and with good reason. The place was packed. People must come in from miles around to visit with friends and share in the good times.

I began to sit down to write, but was interrupted by a polite handsome looking fellow. We conversed for an hour that I enjoyed very much, but then his girl friend came up and kept bugging him to leave. As soon as I was alone I was literally mobbed by a group of kids who all wanted to know how to pronounce their names in English. One little girl was especially my favorite. She was outgoing, intelligent, and very persistent in trying to learn all she could from me. After talking for awhile she invited me over to meet her parents. Her father, Pedro, is an archeologist with the state of Nyarit, teaches history in one of Tepic's Highschools, and has written twenty-two books. They invited us to come visit with them if we got the chance.

Monday, December 8:

Before leaving I gave the responsibility of recording the group's experiences to Kat, and the following four days are from her entries. I will file a report of my heroic adventure upon my return.
This afternoon Clint, Ed, and Al visited with the family of Professor Pedro who Phyllis had met last night in the plaza. They said it went okay but wasn’t real exciting.

We had given Phyllis assigned times when we would have someone posted at the telephone office to receive her call. Her first task was to locate a phone at the airport where we could reach her to forward the flight information. Fortunately it was Clint’s Mom who called first. Mr. Callahan had to send the package as baggage instead of with a personal carrier, but we got the details a-okay. And just as Clint hung up the phone, Phyllis called. So now we were all set. The only problem was that the plane was not to arrive until tomorrow, requiring that Phyllis find a place to spend the night. She said she’d be fine, too.

Then in the evening we followed some students to their English class at a private commercial school. We apparently helped enuf to be invited back to teach whenever we wanted, but more interesting was the invitation to attend a special dinner prepared by one student’s mother at her home tomorrow.

Tuesday, December 9:

Phyllis was supposed to meet her flight at two-fifteen in the afternoon, and then head back here. We expect her arrival tonight, or at the latest, early tomorrow morning. Fine.

In the afternoon we found our way to Teresa’s house, and due right in helping to grind the red, soaked chilies to a paste on a stone metate, grate cabbage, slice lemons, and clean papayas in preparation for dinner. While things were cooking, Teresa climbed a tree in her back yard and shook down some green fruits for us to try. We also tried to catch some tiny baby pigeons, but they moved too fast for us.

The main course consisted of Posole, a pork and chili soup with hominy, cabbage, and lemon juice in it. Very tasty. We sat around after dinner and even Clint drank coffee while we talked. It certainly doesn’t take us long to get intimately involved with the local people where ever we are.

By the end of the day there was still no Phyllis.

Wednesday, December 10:

All Wednesday we four waited for our Phyllis to return or contact us. We fidgeted around the central plaza, and kept a rotated watch at the phone office. Finally we decided to call Mexicana Airlines to see if the package had actually arrived and been picked up, perhaps even to call the guard station from which Phyllis had called us. All our attempts failed. No one was there to answer our questions. What should we do? After our third try we sat down and discussed the possibilities. Why hasn’t Phyllis either arrived or phoned?

1) She doesn’t think it’s necessary.
2) She doesn’t have access to a telephone.
3) She lost our phone number.
4) She tried to have someone deliver a message, or left a message with someone, and it never reached us.
5) She has no money, perhaps because it was stolen from her.
6) She is being held by the police or the government.
7) She is being held by a private citizen.
8) She is ill or hurt and incapacitated in a hospital.

Hmmm. Some of those possibilities aren’t very pleasant and as far as we can guess it could be one reason as easily as any other. We just don’t know. What if, say, we were to send out a rescue party consisting of Al and Clint, tonight, by bus. What would we lose? Two bus fares, the time involved, which wouldn’t really be lost, and an unpleasant night’s sleep for those two. What would we gain? Earlier knowledge of Phyllis'
safety, perhaps an earlier rescue before she gets arrested for vagrancy or something else. Maybe we’d be able to supply her with needed monies, or permission for medical assistance. Fewer phone calls? I guess we just wanted to be doing something definite towards finding out what was going on instead of sitting around worrying about it.

Okay. Let’s do it. Make sure we have all of the useful phone numbers. Forget the sleeping bags, they’re too bulky for a rescue mission. And GRAB THAT DICTIONARY!!!

The plan as of now is as follows. Clint and Al have left for Mazatlán. Ed and I expect to wait for one half hour after each of the following times for a check-in call from Clint and Al tomorrow: nine in the morning, and one, five, and nine o’clock in the afternoon and evenings. If there is no call by five P.M., and no message; we call the American Embassy in Mazatlán, Clint’s parents, and generally start to make as big a stink about this thing as we can. If Phyllis arrives here before Clint and Al can find her, we’ll tell them when they check in.

At about eleven o’clock at night I woke up to the sound of quickly advancing footsteps. I looked up from my bed to see a Mexican stranger running towards me. My first reaction was to be prepared for attack. But the guy bent over and handed me something when he got closer and said in English, “Your friend.” It was a piece of paper.

“De mi amisa Felisa?” I asked.

He answered, “Yes,” and hurried away before I could even grab my flashlight out to read what it said. Ed and I read:

Hello My Friends,

I ran into some difficulties obtaining our car part. It arrived safely but I haven’t yet gotten it away from customs. I’m still working at it and should get it by tomorrow morning. Am still alive and surviving. I’ll call you tomorrow between eight and ten A.M. and will see you upon my return, hopefully tomorrow afternoon.

Love, Phyllis

Thursday, December 11:

We followed the note’s instructions and waited more than the two specified hours at the telephone office. No call came.

We had waited all morning, and waited again at one o’clock for contact from Al or Clint. Nothing.

At five P.M. we were waiting our last half hour by the phones before we were allowed to get anxious. But we were anxious already. What is going on here? This is crazy!

Finally, three pack laden, boot shoed, familiar looking individuals appeared at the door to La Oficina de Lavers Distancia grinning ear to ear, head sated on and book protectively cradled in one of their arms. “Let’s carry on, folks.”

(End of Kat’s notes.)

We did. Together we celebrated the success of our mission over a full fledged restaurant seafood dinner. I, Phyllis, had not eaten successfully for three days so hesitated at least slightly before diving into my pile of shrimp. Then we swapped stories.

My tale was long and detailed. It included not being able to find a working telephone in all of the Mazatlán airport, then having to deal with a man who offered me a place to spend the night that turned out to be his own bedroom, assuming I would join him. I became feverish, nauseated, and diarrhetic to an extent that I never remember experiencing before, possibly as a result of eating an entire can of bad corned beef. I thought I
was going to die, yet I had to deal with the incredibly frustrating situation of sluggish Mexican bureaucrats who refused to help me or give me reliable information, all the while having to speak a foreign language I was none too proficient with. I met helpful people, and weirdos, drunks who were my friends, and government officials who were my enemies. Summoning the total of my willpower and personal energy I was somehow able to withstand or ignore my failing body and continue to track down our only hope of continuing our adventure here in Mexico. And I succeeded. As I finally paid the last tax, signed the last form, and walked out of the customs office utterly exhausted, but with my prize in hand, I saw two pair of boots walking towards me in strong solid strides. Mexicans don’t wear boots like those! And besides, I recognized the whole movement. It’s my friends! Clint and Al! Oh, I’m saved. They cared about me. I can so limp and work on repairing my body. They can do all the thinking now.

And they were glad to. The Phyllis Rescue Team had also succeeded, and they were carefully transporting their prize back to Acapometa. But the bus kept breaking down, and if they did not contact Ed and Kat by five o’clock there would likely be an all out mobilization of the Army, Airforce, and Marines. But just at five the bus pulled into town, and we had won.

Tonight, we looked at each other with a new found respect. Together, we had faced the ultimate challenge. Together, we had beat it into the ground. And now, together, we would sleep on el Maestro’s seamy old parking lot, again.

Friday, December 12:

We have obtained our empaque de cebes; we now own a Chilton’s Toyota manual. All we need to do is get this little red truck put back together again, Senor Mecanico, and, with a prayer that this is all that is wrong with the engine, we will be able to drive out of here and leave you in peace.

But Maestro had five other vehicles also in dire need of repair and could only spend part of his day working for us. This is the day that we vowed to learn more about auto mechanics so that we wouldn’t be so defenseless in the hands of broken machines, nor dependent on those who were knowledgeable in the ways of repairing them. We should be able to do this ourselves.

That night was a fiesta in town to celebrate the day of Saint Guadalupe. None of us felt much like blowing ourselves up with firecrackers, or dealing with those who might offer to do it for us, so we retired rather early.

Saturday, December 13:

On the morning of this, our ninth, day in Acapometa el Maestro said to me, "I’ll be finished with your car by ten." And by three o’clock we really did drive our revived machine out of the city limits and again head south. YA-HOOOOO!!!

Night found us parked by the side of the road, and we slept well on good, clean soil.

Sunday, December 14:

We awoke to find ourselves amidst some kind of ruins. A quick probe of the area uncovered numerous pot shards and pieces of black obsidian. This is the kind of thing we were looking to explore.

Into the truck and let’s see Guadalajara.

Arriving after noon we headed straight for the famous triple decker mercado in the center of town. How can I even begin to describe the quantity of life occurring all at once in this concentrated space. In three dimensions, expanding as far as the eye could see were row upon overwhelming row of vegetables and fruits and candies and blankets and clothings and
Jewelry and hats and musical instruments and hardware supplies and shoes and prepared, ready to eat foods of every imaginable variety. Caldos, fried fish, octopus cocktails, goat heads, pig tacos, chicken mole, beef tamales, sandwiches, fresh squeezed fruit juices, anything you could possibly desire, except possibly a hamburger. We ate all our stomachs would hold and continued feasting with our eyes until even they could stand no more. Then we returned to the truck and set out to find a place to spend the night. Forty pesos, about three dollars and forty cents, bought us all a hot shower and a space in a trailer park.

Feeling clean and refreshed we decided to go out on the town. After dropping Clint off at a cathedral so he could meditate, the rest of us strolled thru a large plaza where an orchestra was performing. It must not have been considered very arrousing music, because the Army truck hidden nearby only held six machine gun armed policia. We kept walking.

And came upon a large fancy theater in which the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" was being played. Let's go see it! We gathered up Clint, pooped all our monies and purchased tickets. It wasn't very well attended, which is not unusual considering Mexico is a stronghold of strict Catholics, but it was marvelously well done. Both the music and the singing were excellent.

Sleeping on three inches of soft green grass that night was heavenly.

Monday, December 15:
This day we spent laundering our clothes, taking another hike thru the marketplace, and driving south towards Mexico City. We camped off to the side of the road under some trees in a corn field.

Tuesday, December 16:
We reached our destination by dusk, but it was difficult to determine exactly what was dusk and what was smog. Our eyes stung, heads throbbed, and we were cramped from the long day's drive. It took over an hour to reach the center of this metropolis due to traffic, so when we finally halted near the central park we decided to go our own ways and relax as we pleased. I found a church to meditate in, then walked the streets. Eventually I stumbled on the underground subway system, as Ed and Al had, and while I was meandering about, got offered ten pesos because the gentleman thought I was lost and had no money.

Another trailer park provided us with a place to lay our heads, only it wasn't nearly as nice as the one in Guadalajara.

Wednesday, December 17:
We awoke and drove straight to the Museum of Archeology. It was tremendous. What a creation. Two huge buildings, each with two floors were just packed with artfully displayed artifacts and high quality reconstructed scenes. We spent most of the day there and still didn't see it all.

When tired of walking around we all met by the huge column in the center of the courtyard which seemed to support the entire roof over our heads. We discussed how much time we had and what we wanted to do with it, and came up with a schedule that would allow us just enough time to visit Oaxaca and then high tail it for home. We would make it if the cars could handle it. Do we try? Of course!

Escaping the maze of twisting unmarked highways thru this crazy took all of our concentrated effort, but we succeeded by five o'clock, and then began to climb over some fairly high mountain ranges covered with the kind of pine forests we might find in the U.S. Halfway up a particularly steep hill we spotted a car in trouble parked by the side of the road and decided to stop and see if we could be of any assistance. A battery jump got their auto functioning again, but as Ed started the Toyota, the headlights went out, and we had to pull over quickly and try to fix them. There was not much room between the narrow lane and the cliff face, but we had no
choice. Since the car wouldn’t start on its own we decided to attempt a pop start in reverse. The first try failed. The second try failed. By now it was dark, the trucks and buses came barreling around the blind curve and we, with no warning lights, were perilously close to their path.

The third try failed and I was petrified. I pleaded with Ed to try using the key again. I truly felt as if these were the last few seconds of my life in this world, and there was nothing I could do to save myself. Finally Ed gave in, and as the starter motor ground away I closed my eyes and concentrated every ounce of my being on the three-finger technique of visualization. And she started!!! Whew! Jump in and let’s get out of here. I was sure glad to be given a few more years to live.

We drove until midnight and slept in a beautiful spot.

Thursday, December 18:

Rising at six-thirty, we drove with the tarps tied over our wooden frame because the sky threatened rain and actually spit out a few drops now and then. When the truck pulled to a stop at noon, Clint and I popped our heads out from under the tent and discovered we were in Oaxaca.

We cashed some traveler’s checks at the bank, parked near the market, and planned to meet back at the truck at three-thirty. I had a headache, but when I entered the market I became so engrossed in the handwork and beautiful woven goods for sale that I forgot everything else, including my headache and the time. When I remembered and returned to our meeting place, neither the truck nor any of my companions were to be found. Ah, well. I guess I just sit here and wait. But then guess who appears from around the corner but Clint, caught in the same predicament as I. So we both waited. Till Clint offered to stay here and write letters and come get me if the others showed up and wanted to leave. They did come back for us, but agreed to a new plan of meeting back at eight. We all had some Christmas type shopping to do and had seen many tempting gifts.

Later that evening we found a grumpy little trailer park in which to rest our bodies.

Friday, December 19:

Fresh papaya from the mercado was worth waking up to. After changing the radiator water we chose to head back to the market place for at least the morning, and found stands that served a very satisfying, nourishing, yet inexpensive breakfast of rice, black beans, hard boiled eggs, and tortillas.

It felt different here in Oaxaca. The population seemed to consist more of the local colorful Indians from the nearby mountains than the common, heavily Spanish mixed Mexican types. And these Indians are not as openly friendly and accepting as what we were used to, but they are also much nicer to deal with in the marketplace, not so pushy and aggressive. Also they tend to be more artful in their pottery and woven clothing. It was a pleasure just to browse through the stalls and admire the craftwork. The next time I’m traveling south, I think I’d like to begin here and see what comes next. It feels like there’s a cultural difference beginning about this latitude.

In the afternoon we chugged up the long hill to the ruins of Monte Alban. What a place. With a view that overlooks the entire valley below lies the remains of what once must have been a majestic city. We spent the entire afternoon exploring all sorts of secret passageways, sewers, pyramids, courtyards, and tombs, then headed down into town to eat.

We were beginning to feel that our experience was coming to a close. The idea of spending a few peaceful days together back in the United States, relaxing, getting everything organized and settled between us before we split up began to sound very attractive. Clint’s parents’ house afforded us the additional luxuries of a meal or two prepared by that
superb cook, Virginia Callahan, and maybe a good hot soak in a Jacuzzi. This time together would also give us a chance to write feedback letters to each other, a useful tool for self analysis and an excellent final touch to our adventure. The plan began to form in our heads just to drive straight thru to the Callahan's and abandon further attempts at exploring this sleeping nation. Mainland Mexico would have to keep for another time.

With this schedule in mind we began immediately by repairing the tail lights and driving til midnight. It was going to be a long haul.

Saturday, December 20:

After a quick breakfast of TVP chicken chunks noodle soup, it was a race against time. Again we drove all day, and by nightfall had reached Guadalajara, tho not without having to improvise repairs on several parts of our machine.

Instead of stopping within the city we thought it would be mighty nice to get a head start the next morning and drive thru the city tonight. Clint was piloting this time and we still became enmeshed in the snarl of traffic and unmarked roads. Finally breaking free we found a likely spot to sleep, but were rudely awakened by a heard of cattle who mistook our bed for their path.

Sunday, December 21:

Today we reached Tepic, the town Clint was familiar with when he was here to get our cylinder head milled. Again, we needed to perform some repairs on the truck. The brakes squeaked badly and didn't work very well anymore. So we pulled into a garage who specialized in brakes and had them take a look. Yep. Just as we thought. Only, remember, this is a Toyota. We don't have any spare parts. But...maybe we can dig you up something.

And they did! It took all day, but by evening we were back on the road speeding north. Nine o'clock or so found us in San Blas, weary of doing nothing but driving, driving, driving. As Clint crawled out of the rear of the truck, a local drunk mistook his wobbly knees for a condition of inebriation, put his arm around Clint's shoulders to steady him, and began to take him off to who knows where so they could drown their sorrows together. It was touching, but Clint quickly straightened up. Things like this can get out of hand rather quickly.

Maybe we'll spend a day here, rest up bit. We found a little restaurant that was open and hungrily devoured oyster echiladas. Across the street near the square was a pinata party. Women, children, and grinsos gathered around a colorful paper mache and pottery burro hung from a rope, the other end of which wound over a pulley and down to where a man could tug on it to keep the burro just out of reach. Tied loosely to the pinata were a dozen or so long tassles which the women ripped off one at a time.
They had to perform the action described on the attached paper, and it was usually something embarrassing. Once the tassels were gone, someone handed a long stick to whoever was blindfolded and they tried to bash the pinata to pieces; a difficult task if the rope operator was good. But eventually someone catches it just right and everyone is showered with candies and trinkets from within the shattered burro. And while all are busily picking up the treasure, a man dressed as a bull comes running out of the building and his entire costume explodes with firecrackers and fountains of sparks, scattering the crowd.

The area here is jungly and humid. We rented a space in the Loco Coco Trailer Park and were dripped on all night by the crazy palm trees.

Tuesday, December 23:

We made our way to the mouth of a clear river where it was advertised that for a fee, they would take you on a jungle cruise. And that's just what we wanted. After buying banana bread from some local hippy type gringos who were living on the beach, we hopped in the small motorlaunch and headed upstream. Our guide wouldn't slow down much, but we were still able to see some exotic jungle birds and a couple large iguanas. That's almost as good as an alligator, no? We climbed around awhile at the mouth of the stream, and took a dip in the cool clear water before agreeing to leave Tarzan land. A man was preparing some smoked fish near our car when we returned. A small fish and a Mexican roll provided an excellent lunch before we crawled back into our cramped quarters and continued our trek.

Pulling into Mazatlan near dark, we raided a bakery, then recovered Al's car intact, and reapporitioned the loads of passengers and equipment. Taking off again, we realized that we were without insurance for Al's car and decided to stop and sleep on the side of the road. During the night four separate diesel trucks pulled off for a rest also at our spot. They made noisy company.

Wednesday, December 24:

It's Christmas eve and we stopped in a small town for dinner. Delicious tacos here. Just before we're about to pull out, we hesitate and an ambulance whizzes by us. It's a good thing we stopped. Tonight's a crazy time to be out driving around because of all the drinking that's going on. But we want to get home.

Thursday, December 25:

We awaken to find that we've spent the night in a corn field. We wish each other a Merry Christmas! and then continue driving.

Crossing the border begins to loom in our minds as the next barrier we'll have to deal with. We've been lucky so far and no one has bothered to search us. Now that we've been here for four months, they're bound to tear apart everything we own, and that could use up half a precious day of our time. I guess there's no sense in worrying about it now.

Friday, December 26:

Here we go. Hold your breath, comb your hair, put a smile on that face. It's time to re-enter America. Are you ready?

"Where are you coming from?"

"Oaxaca."

"How long have you been in Mexico?"

"Four months."

"Uh-huh. Pull over and park there, please."

Oh, nuts! They're going to search us. Well, we may as well just sit back and accept a few hours delay.
Two army type men strode over to us with unfriendly looks in their eyes and shot some questions at us. We had nothing to hide and answered honestly. They said, "Okay, you can go."

Must be our innocent faces and good vibrations, but we weren't going to argue. We waited around on the Arizona side till a bank opened up and we could exchange our pesos for dollars. And what do you think the first things we do to celebrate our safe return home is? Of course, we eat! Clint bought a frozen chocolate cream pie and we savored every crumb. And next we headed for the nearest McDonald's and snarfed Big Macs, fries and shakes. Previous to this our stomachs were doing quite fine. But getting used to American food again was not an easy thing to do. For the next six days all five of us had a good case of the "Returning Tourists."

And by that night we pulled into the Callahan's driveway, took hot showers, an incredibly luxurious Jacuzzi bath, ate the first in a series of lush, carefully prepared gourmet meals, and crashed on the red shag carpet of the living room floor, next to a crackling fire in the hearth, the colorfully bedecked Christmas tree, and a picture window view of the immense field of sparkling lights which was the City of Los Angeles spreading out below us. At long last we were home, but we were no longer sleeping under the stars.

Saturday, December 27:

Today's schedule was followed by four or five similarly structured days that went something like this. Wake up around eight o'clock and devour a huge breakfast of orange juice, waffles, pancakes, French toast, or maybe eggs with bacon and toast, plus anything tempting left over from the previous evening's meal, such as pie or Christmas cookies. We'd lay around for awhile after cleaning up the dishes, and then continue working on writing or typing the personal feedback letters we were creating for each other. Perhaps we'd take a Jacuzzi, then eat a medium sized lunch, followed by some work on the final details of our trip, like measuring and recording all of the food we had left over after our original calculations to help us make better guesses next time, or counting up receipts and figuring out how much we spent or how much we should pay each other to even out the expenses.

Tonight's meal was a belated full course Christmas dinner with all of the trimmings lovingly prepared for us by Virginia with only a little assistance from us. The pile of food placed before us was so huge that it was more than my eyes could handle. And if my eyes couldn't eat that much then my stomach was certainly going to have a difficult time. Somehow we managed, and after washing and putting away more dishes we would relax, listen to music, and talk, or hop in the Jacuzzi again, then sleep soundly on the living room floor.

Finally came the day when we had completed all of our organizing and finalized our manuscripts. We exchanged our letters with one another reading them over for half a day, then began to depart.

We'd learned over the past months together that removing the life from living organisms was not an easy or pleasant thing to do. Yet here, we were now faced with the task of killing our group, breaking the bonds we had carefully developed and which had allowed us to survive even the most difficult of obstacles. We were all saddened to go our separate ways, but at the same time we were also glad to have some space to ourselves for awhile, make some decisions as an individual instead of always having to consider the needs of four other people.

And we left, not with a final, "Goodbye," but with an, "I'll see ya later," because we all knew it would happen.

Sure enuf, about a month later we had a reunion in San Luis Obispo where we gathered together anyone we could find from the original Thursday Night Meeting Group and showed the seven hundred slides we'd taken. Such memories are exciting to share, and the slides captured much of the feel-
ings we wanted the others to experience. But by one in the morning our
guests were nodding off to sleep. We looked at each other and finally un-
derstood that what we had done together could truly have meaning only to
the five of us. (And so it ends.)

POST SCRIPT

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In the Spring of 1976, four months after the group left their beach
home in Baja California, Clint was involved with another project and found
himself camped on a familiar beach between San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San
Lucas, not too far south of Rancho San Luis. While there he borrowed an
automobile and ferried a few of his friends over the rugged road to spend
a day with Fernando and his family. The following notes were extracted
from a letter he wrote to Phyllis, Al, Kat, and Ed, describing the events
of that day.

Thursday, April 8, 1976:

It worked out beautifully!

I spread the word about what I intended to do among those people whom
I thought might be interested or would appreciate such an experience. We
collected ourselves and departed a little before noon, Jeff, Bill—with
a shaved bald head, Neil, Carl and I. Our first stop was in San Jose
where we drank some Vitas, ate ice cream, and visited the panaderia. I
talked with the guy pulling cookies out of the brick oven. He remembered
me and asked about the rest of you. We bought some cookies, and also
picked up a chicken from the market across the street. Chicken is twenty-
five pesos per kilogram! Whew!

Two hours and two million bumps later we were shaking hands with Don
Alberto. I had given my companions a little introductory talk to decrease
the potential culture shock, and this had developed into a really decent
conversation in the car. So here we were, a different set of five grinsos
sitting opposite this wrinkled, kind old rancher. His short wife with the
bottle-bottom lensed glasses came out to wish all of you a "Salud," and to
and to inquire about the photographs. "When will they come?"

Don Alberto wanted to know what each of you was doing, and then told
me that Fernando was to visit him that afternoon. I said we'd try and
catch him on the road. We took our leave, piled back into the trusty Ford
station wagon, and headed towards Rancho San Luis, taking it VERY slow.
We made it to the hill just overlooking the Sea of Cortez, and decided to
hoof it the rest of the way. Backed the car around, parked it, got out, and
there, sitting astride Asno and just coming up from the ranch was Fern-
ando, a nylon net bag in his hands, presumably on his way to Don Alber-
to's. He stopped dead, peering at us in his non-offensive way, and then
he must have recognized me because all of a sudden his large front teeth
poked out between his lips and he smiled, trying to recognize the others.
I sauntered over to him, grinning.

"Que paso, amigo?" I asked.

"Nada," was his reply, as usual.

It was a strong grip he had when we shook hands. He slid off the
burro and together we walked to the house. Responding to Fernando's call,
Adelfa peeked out the kitchen door and then yelled for the kids. She has
such a warm shining face and radiant smile. I was really happy to shake
hands with her. I introduced everybody, handed her the box of goodies I'd
brought, and we all walked over to sit down in the covered porch.

Everything was the same. It was amazing to me. I don't know what I
expected, but it was as if no time had elapsed since we'd departed. This
place where we spent such a magical time really exists. It's still here!
One of the first things Fernando brought up was that when he talked with various friends in the area they had suggested to him that we gringos had buried a treasure in our camp before leaving last year. I laughed. I told him yes, we did bury a treasure there. Three of them in fact. Brown smelly ones under our yellow plastic toilet seat. But I think he was serious.

The four guys didn’t know much Spanish, and they weren’t the precise special people I’d wanted to share this experience with, but nonetheless they were good. They accepted what was happening and really got into it. And it was so neat! Fernandito and Vira Cruz weren’t afraid of them, and came out to play as they finally did with us last year. Fernando said that the two of them remembered a lot and persisted in asking, “Where is Felisa?” “When will we see Eduardo and Katarina again?”

I had Adelfa open my box, and asked her if she was interested in learning how to make bread. Her eyes lit up. Remember how she said she would get so tired of eating tortillas? So she and I went into the kitchen and the other guys went on a walk. Fernando and the children came in and sat down to watch as I showed Adelfa how to assemble basic bread: how hot the yeast water should be, how to tell when you were done kneading. Fernando brought out the rusty old oven and we set the dough in it to rise. And it worked!

As we talked I kept catching Fernando or Adelfa intently staring at me, to see if I was real or something. I would look them back straight in the eyes and could feel that the bond between us was strong and warm. But I laugh when I think of it. They repeatedly insisted that I never work. How could I travel around, bring them gifts, drive cars all the time? Where do I get my money? Maybe there really is a treasure buried in Rancho Campo after all.....

So we got invited to dinner. Adelfa would make caldo out of the chicken, but she lacked onions. Fernando was on his way to meet a man at Don Alberto’s to pick some up, so I offered, he accepted, and I drove him back up the road. Fernando and I. He grabbed his rifle as we left, and I told the others that Adelfa might teach them how to make tortillas if they asked and were sincerely interested. They were and she did.

At Don Alberto’s, the onion man never showed up so Fernando borrowed some from Don Alberto’s wife. The strong handsome ranch hand who accepted the pan of sweetrolls from Al and who saved Phyllis eggs was there, so was the younger man who had shot us our rabbit that Albert ate the eyes of. We talked together as if no time had passed. Perhaps it hadn’t.

During the drive back to Rancho San Luis Fernando suddenly said, “Stop!” He rolled down the window, leaned out with his “twenty-two,” and BLAM! Then he looked at me and grinned. He hopped out of the car and returned shortly with a rabbit, a hole thru its breast. I can’t believe that guy. I never saw a thing.

It was dark by the time we reached the sea again. Fernando skinned and cleaned the rabbit as the five of us watched. Then we sat down to a fine meal of handmade, warped tortillas, fresh, homemade yeast bread, frijoles, and Adelfa’s chicken caldo. It was delicious. And to see everyone’s face glowing in the light of the flickering kerosene lamp, the sound of waves crashing in the background, made it all seem so peaceful, so right. It was if we belonged here, had been here for ever. It was so incredibly neat how we all fit. Amazing. What can I say? You know what I’m talking about. It was you who helped make this a possibility for us.

As we parted, Fernando gave us the rabbit which I will prepare for our dinner tomorrow, and Adelfa placed one of her fresh soft cheeses in my hand. We shared one last handshake, a little firmer and longer than necessary, and then I said, “Hasta luego,” I will see you again. I don’t know exactly when, but I will see you again. My being there now was proof that this would be so.

(And so it was.)
FINANCES

*************

In the beginning we'd decided to go into this thing together, sort of what they call a joint venture. This means that with the exception of personal spending, we'd split whatever it cost among the five of us. The way we kept track of expenses was both vehicles had coil-bound notebooks in their glove compartments. Each person's initial outlay of cash during our expedition outfitting was recorded from receipts into the back of a book and all further group expenditures were dated, initialed and itemized on the remaining pages. Only in the final tally were quantities converted from pesos into dollars, and then we paid each other whatever it took to even up the score.

Al performed an analysis of our expenses just to see where our funds went. The breakdown is rather interesting. The total cost of our three month, six thousand mile Fall Quarter Experience was roughly $2285, which includes an estimated personal expense of seventy dollars per individual for postage, gifts, souvenirs, snacks, film, and whatnot. This makes the cost per person for the entire three months an incredible $457. We were gone for ninety-eight days which makes it about $4.66 per person per day, or, if we continued to live in this style, $1703 per person per year. This seems to say that if you're clever and careful and willing to modify your lifestyle a little, living a dynamic, interesting, rewarding life doesn't have to cost very much.
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*1 This is a queasy figure (+/- 2%) because I (Al) can’t find a record of one insurance purchase.
*2 This is a bit flakey too (+/- 15%) since some items haven’t been replaced yet as of this figuring.
*3 This is Ed’s, Kat’s, and Phyllis’ preliminary expenditures including the Toyota’s first insurance, motor oil, some food, minor equipment, etc. A breakdown of this number would make our other figures more accurate.
AFTER-WORDS

As we were putting "SEEDS" together we wanted to include in it some kind of feedback on the whole Fall Quarter Experience from the participants, a final statement as to the worth of the adventure, its gut level effect, its meaning. So we submitted the following evaluative questions to the five.

In looking back on this three month period, what happened to you? What did you gain? Was it worth it to you? How do you think things worked out? What would you have changed? Kept the same? What was good? Bad? What were the biggest awarenesses you came upon personally? Generally? What did you like best about the experience? The worst? Do you have any other comments? Whatever you really think.

The intensity and strength of their responses must shed some light on the value of their adventure.

ED CLARK

I probably would not have written this paper were it not for the compilation of our experience into this book. My only personal account of the Quarter is in my memory, and my memories are usually kept under lock and key, to be shared with only the most diligent of locksmiths. But with only a small amount of proddings I agreed to write down my reflections of the journey.

I hereby declare that all discussion of how to design and organize such an experience is secondary to realizing the purpose. I say REALIZING the purpose because even tho the participants state their various goals and objectives, the driving forces ride unnoticed beneath the wave of idealistic rhetoric. My pretested intentions were to further my education, increase my awareness and experience alternate forms of living. Such expectations were easily fulfilled — the situation demanded it. But I know I had somehow accomplished more, had torn some shackles loose, had pulled a rather heavy shirt off my back. The trip was so impressive, so full of new insight, that it required a complete re-evaluation of my values, my goals, and my place in society. And I realize now that I allowed this (or most likely wanted this) to happen to me. I was open to it and prepared for it. So after returning I had to turn on the lamp and investigate my unstated purposes.

In a super generalized sense, last Fall was a response to my previous life style. All my thoughts and actions came in reaction to standard schooling methods, typical student mindsets, and the still and stagnant waters that bog down society. I had reached the point where I could not justify what I was doing; a rather hot and bothered voice kept breathing down my neck to change. I needed to get control of my life, to become an active rather than passive agent. The idea that I could do anything I wanted to fascinated me; all I needed was something to want. Unfortunately I wasn’t yet able to generate sufficiently captivating wants. Fortunately I had enuf curiosity to investigate the potential of a strikingly untypical blue ditto posted thruout the Cal Poly campus.

I knew from the start that, given the opportunity, I would participate in the self-styled learning environment. So when the proposal was
issued, I climbed aboard. I didn’t have to be persuaded, convinced, or coerced. Going on the journey represented a new beginning to me, a setting out from under, a serious attempt at living, and from this perspective the Quarter held enormous power. The trip would determine my future directions.

So here I am now. Looking back. Analyzing. Which way am I going? What did this experience do to me? The realizations were basic, yet so important, so essential. My expectations have raised drastically; I expect a lot out of life; I expect a lot out of people; I expect a lot out of relationships; I expect a lot out of myself. The power of our group was truly amazing. We could do anything as a group wanted to do. I mean we were there on our own stretch of sand and we were our total existence. What we thought, what we ate, what we talked about, what we saw, what we felt, it was all for ourselves, nothing else was important, and the potential of being your own master and knowing it really boggles my mind. Everything falls down — all the manners, rules, codes, traditions, morals, and ethics. Everything crumbles and then you step in and start building it back together. Only the shape is different because the builder is unique, and you understand the structure more because you put it together, and you know why everything is there because each brick has a purpose.

And you enjoy living, because the walls don’t confine they strengthen, and the windows don’t obscure they shed light, and the roof doesn’t enclose because it doesn’t exist.

AL FRIEDMAN

***************

Upon returning from the Golden State’s armpit, I was mildly amazed to find my brain intact. The amazement was natural. The mildness, however, was the result of a dormant mind. Smogville does that to unwary souls, and flying machine industry stifles them like an elephant riding piggyback on an ant. Holy socks! I was almost a normie, tho I’ve never quite had that special lack.

So there I was, stumbling down the halls of my secure little world as the numbness subsided and my life grew ripe for some change and newness. I spied it on the wall like a piece of clever graffiti. There was a simple ditto sheet with its familiar skunk-blue ink saying nothing at all, but its message radiated like a foshorn. The positive mentrons were just oozing out everywhere, and I would have stopped to clean them up, but I didn’t have the confidence to do it.

Now that wasn’t anything that couldn’t be fixed with nine months of questioning, thirteen thousand miles of growth, a little love, sleepless nights, and spaghetti all over my face, so it culminated into the adventures we came here to discuss.

Fall Quarter was undoubtedly a complete success. It was a time for concentrated learning, growth, and behavior changes. Perhaps the most important new concept I grasped is that learning and growing is not only painful but is exquisitely FUN and exciting. There was so much to do and often a very conducive environment for learning and experiencing so that the potential gains were limited only by time priorities. I learned many things about physical relationships such as skin diving, thermodynamics and astronomy, and about basic attitudes and awarenesses such as independent learning (the Socratic method), the power of mental energy, and cultural relativity.
Cultural relativity means that there are many different cultures, and they all work well in their own right. Although I had just completed a two month, thirteen thousand mile inventory of the U.S., our adventure was my first contact with a significantly different culture from my own. My understanding of this new culture gives me a place to stand and look at my own culture with some of the objectivity of an observer from an alien planet. Also, I learned enough Spanish so that I can express myself in another language with different reality structures. The greatest importance of this new tool for expression is not for communicating with others, but for my own thinking. The ideas and awarenesses from the Mexican culture are important enough to me that I am expecting to travel to even foreigner places (such as the Orient) in the near future.

The distance and isolation from my culture made it easier for me to be free and unique and totally involved. There were only four people with whom I regularly interacted, and their values and attitudes were compatible with mine so that they encouraged my growth rather than stifling it. The setting was beautiful — not just a desert, but a forest of cactus with a beautiful virgin beach and warm, tropical waters. We had adequate privacy, lots of room, a warm climate, and plenty of new and unique external stimulus from the ocean, plants, animals, and people. The distance and "exoticness" of our beach and travels gave me a dramatic feeling that I was truly on an expedition. This feeling (and the potentially dangerous or hostile elements in our new environment) undoubtedly helped us to become a close, cohesive team. This feeling still lingers, and I feel a stronger common bond to this group (these individuals) than I have ever felt toward any other group.

If I were to redo Fall Quarter, the most important change would be to improve communications on all levels. This means making more concensus decisions, using a talk-board (bulletin board) to make sure everyone knows what's happening, and, most importantly, being more open and spontaneous about sharing my perspectives and emotions. Due to our constant close contact, interpersonal frictions sometimes arose, but I missed my chance to capitalize on them. If I had been more instantaneous and direct about confronting these differences, I could have learned a great deal, developed deeper, longer-lasting relationships, and changed the situations to more positive ones.

Our living situation required that an unusually large portion of our time be spent on "the business of living" such as carrying water bottles, driving into town, brushing sand off of everything, and preparing food. This time was often just as fun and educational as time spent on "studying," and is definitely just as important a part of the total experience. Still, not a lot of time was left for just plain reading, communicating, and thinking, and so I would have liked to stay longer. Probably five to six months would have been ample.

The group of five people worked out well, but I think seven or eight people would be the ideal number. Most of the research-type learning was done independently, which leads me to suspect that we could have done a little synergizing. This is just a hunch, however, not a strong feeling.

The only other regret which comes to mind is that I did not take a large enough part in the early planning stages. At the time I was busy with other things and didn't really want to do any more than was necessary. In retrospect, I would now put many other things aside for the opportunity to participate in the planning. Besides the self-satisfaction to be gained, the planning was just as much a part of the whole learning experience as was the trip itself.

Perhaps the most powerful tool I gained this Fall is the use of mind control. I haven't yet put a lot of energy into developing this, but so far I have been successful at disposing of headaches, relaxing, doing some simple mind-reading (beyond much chance of coincidence), remembering and learning from dreams, not feeling minor pains, and using alpha-level to
concentrate and to "pick" knowledge out of the air. My greatest triumph was successfully reading a teacher's mind for the answer to a quiz problem. While in alpha-level, I visualized myself asking him for the method, and he gave me an equation which I had never seen before. On a "last-ditch effort," I tried it and was absolutely stunned to find out (for the first time ever) my method of solution was identical to his.

One of my most immediately obvious changes is my attitude toward school. I'm asking better questions and more of them so that I do a fast, accurate job of detecting the crap and seeing the concepts. I feel free to tune-out or leave when my time is being wasted, and I rarely seem to care too much about what the teacher or other students think of me. My concern about grades has dropped to the point where I won't even bother to argue with a teacher who misgraded my work, and I haven't yet bothered to do any heavy studying before tests. Best of all, I feel like an independent learner. That is, I can learn and solve problems from my own knowledge without books or teachers to lead me by the hand.

Creativity is fast becoming a regular part of my thinking. So much so that almost every day I get a chance to improvise or to do some sort of a quick brainstorm even if I'm only trying to decide what to cook or where to go. Our experiences boosted my confidence and my creative output so that I now have a constant flow of new ideas and concepts, and the motivation to explore new areas and keep growing better every day. I've always felt (in an abstract way) that I could achieve anything I really wanted strongly, but now I've begun to develop confidence on a day to day basis, and I see it in my increasing spontaneity, less need for security, and caution about not limiting myself. Fall Quarter was a priceless turning point in my life and the start of even better things yet to come.

PHYLLIS GOLDMAN

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In my journeys thru the mountains I've observed the earth around me, watching flowers emerge from barren rocks and soil. The flowers die and new ones come up. The earth and flowers must live harmoniously in order to both grow, expand, become healthier. When I made my journey to Mexico I took with me many (altho limited) knowledges, understandings, awarenesses, strengths, desires.

However, these qualities meant very little (being scattered in many directions) until each quality could also live in harmony with the others and therefore allowing and causing much growth and expansion, just like the little flower who needed to live in harmony with the earth in order to grow and expand healthily instead of staying in one place and eventually dying out.

This broad theory encompasses everything I grew to understand and learn in Mexico. My personal characteristics began to harmonize.

I attribute much of my learning and growth to the atmosphere we built around ourselves: one of high awareness; consciousness; high productivity, with high quality interactions and energies flowing. It's called being ALIVE. We could feel these attitudes in the air we would breath. Combining the desire to learn, to create, to empathize, communicate and to survive the physical, mental and natural elements, and to survive them in a positive light. It is these attitudes that allowed for an electric atmosphere.

I learned how easily this type of environment that we made will use a person's strength towards their potential, and not only halfway as in normal existence. So it is important to make my own environment and not let my environment make me. This takes more self energy, and at times being
alone with this energy will be difficult, but that I must maintain myself. I also became clearer as to my self-made direction. I realized where I could take my life with a lot of extra work, and where I would have gone with the guidance of society, and most definitely only living a standard half alive life. During this time period I gained enuf strength and understanding to head into a self-directed path of my own.

Now I see the secret of making the best persons. It is to grow in the open air and sleep with the earth.
- Walt Whitman

We lived a rugged life livings outside. Always a hardship around the corner to keep us on our toes. I believe this builds inner strength. I need this in my environment to maintain my physical and mental strength.

Considering this three month experience contributed much to my growth and happiness I would most definitely want to create a similar atmosphere in my everyday life. But back to city life I realize I can only obtain a part of this atmosphere if I’m lucky. People of this magnitude are hard to find. So the next thought and step is to once again create a group environment with the same mental premises present during our Mexico experience. But wait.....keep doing this at three month intervals? No, once it has been done successfully I now know it can be given a longer trial. Since I want this to be a part of my everyday life, I would now strive to set up a living situation to blend with a smallish environment so we could earn money and our spare time will be spent on sharing instead of searching for people to share with and rarely finding.

The basic attitudes of our Mexico trip are important to maintain in a living environment. I would not have changed much during this experience because I gained as much as possible in one three month period of time. But in a semi-permanent type living situation I would add basic structures to live in with more space per person. Separate rooms are feasible, and of course adding more people to my living situation. More variety, therefore more to share and expand with. I would incorporate more human relations activities, an attitude of being more physically at ease with each other. More hussing and touch makes for a healthier and closer knit group. To incorporate constant feedback sessions in small groups during the experience, not after the fact. This will keep it going longer and stronger. Each working and earning money outside the group and also within, more equipment to work with, workshops and activities.

Some sort of group project in this larger longer lasting living environment would be needed to pull all of our energies together in creation of an idea. I felt an addition to our Mexico experience was picking a different culture to live in. We not only had each other to learn from, but we also had another culture to interact with. A new language and lifestyle to learn. It gave us a group project and we were all learning something new.

I believe this experience gave us all more strength, self-confidence and a love and desire for the maximum in life. I now have a small ideal of what can be, and will not be happy with less.

Stimulation = Motivation = Action = Learning = Growth = Awareness = Understanding = A Richer Fuller Existence.

Hey!.....I'm ALIIIII

III
III
II

IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE! ARE YOU?
How do I say? The total Fall Quarter Experience, beginning with the Introductory Meeting and continuing all the way thru our final feedback days at Callahan’s Diner— I just realized that encompassed an entire year— was a direct, high impact series of learnings for me. I began with a hypothesis and hopes, and didn’t know what to expect. Now I have some incredible conclusions.

There ARE freeks around, people with an open, positive, energetic mindset, and many of them enjoy congregating in an extrasocietal environment defined by nothing more than themselves, bouncing off of each other towards awareness. They want to grow. They want to learn. And this was one of the aspects I liked best, the pure joy of us expending a lot of energy together and succeeding at doing exactly what we wanted to do. And the environment we set up was as near to ideal for learning as I’ve been in. By using Awareness Hours and Office Hours I felt I could bring out for scrutiny any subject or question that interested me and get excellent interaction. Several times I used the group’s powerful brainstorming capacity to help me deal with my own problems. And then there was the way we dealt with group problems.

As situations provided us with many diverse multiple-path decision opportunities, by sheer repetition and the necessity of time and energy conservation we distilled our own style of group problem solving that slide along something like this.

1) Define the problem. Analyze it. What are we dealing with here, really?
2) Unlimited yourself. Okay, ready? What are all the possible ways we could deal with this situation? What’s our plan. Storm your brain.
3) Now, is this just a simple matter of preference, or is it a more substantial problem requiring a group consensus? If it is preference, then let’s vote on a path to take, or temporarily divide up.
4) If the situation is more complicated, does anybody have aces up their sleeve? Some special knowledge that suggests we should follow one of these plans over the others? If so let’s hear it. If not let’s consensitize a choice.

We didn’t actually outline or verbalize this method while we used it. Looking back, it’s what we were doing. Tho Al sometimes felt we voted when we should have used consensus, and Kat sometimes felt her opinions weren’t being listened to, it worked amazingly well for us.

And the people. There we were on this beach. Nearest neighbors were three kilometers south. No television, no radio, no newspapers, stereos, movie theaters, rock concerts, none of the diversions readily available in any city. Just us, our books, some musical instruments, and our kitchen, and all of us were complaining that there wasn’t enuf time in a day to do everything we wanted to get done. Part of this feeling was due to our deep and unexpected interaction with the natives. Much of our energy was spent learning the Mexican language, foods, rules, and customs instead of following our original curricula. But this, if anything, enhanced the experience. We simply changed plans. Boredom was inconceivable. The concept of a weekend vacation to get away from it all did not apply to us. We were on a permanent vacation, an edu-vacation, and tho we might have worked and studied harder than we’d ever done before, we were having the time of our lives. Talk about creative, self-motivated people. This I liked.

The whole experience I liked. It was neat and positive and simple and productive. I learned much about myself. I would do it again. I will do it again. But I might change a few things.

First I think I would have more people along, somewhere between eight and twelve. This larger group would complicate decisions and interaction,
the former making things more difficult the potentially eased by a clarified problem solving technique, the latter making things more interesting and possibly promoting more meaningful interpersonal relations. This was a dimension we five seemed not to have to deal with, but which would certainly be involved in a more permanent, large scale living environment that I feel is one of my possible futures. I know close intra-group relationships can be messy. I know they can be painful and difficult. But I also know the magic that can be manifested, and I want the practice so I can get better at making wonderful things happen.

I have observed some characteristics common to groups of people that; from talking with others, if not brought out into the open, put into perspective, and treated correctly seem usually to be a major cause of the destruction of the group. One phenomena is easy to put into words. It's the Last Guy Problem.

In any group there will be a person or persons whose thinking patterns, mindsets, beliefs, habits, and rules are farthest from agreement with the group standard or average. If we made a number line graph and positioned members on it according to their deviation from the norm in all of these areas, then there would be some "guy" in that group who is the most different. He's the Last Guy. (A corollary to this theory is that if at any time I am in a group and I cannot detect the Last Guy, then it probably is me.) This outsider always tends to have a point of view a little different from the rest of the members, uses a different type of logic in his thinking, and has troubles communicating his ideas and opinions to the group primarily because they have a tough time accepting them.

So why not just kick this person out? This is where some groups self-destruct. Eliminate your Last Guy and there's still going to be someone with the most differing viewpoint who will automatically be shoved into the position. There's always a Last Guy, even in the Last Guys Unite club, which is sort of what Fall Quarter was all about.

Now, there is nothing wrong with being this Last Guy. It's a little lonely and somewhat more difficult, but you're freer. You have more of a chance to cause creative things to happen because you are usually the group's best source of new ideas. It certainly doesn't mean you should keep your weird views to yourself. Speak them out. Sometimes others are just afraid to say what they are really thinking. I've made very close friends declaring Last Guy propositions in a group.

This freak is usually involved in most of the situations that prevent the group from "running smoothly," which is an impossibility anyway. (See next paragraph.) and it is difficult not to name him as the cause, the scape goat. The Last Guy problem is a commonality among groups and, tho it's not always easy, is best handled as if it were everpresent and normal. Because it is. We were faced with it in our Baja California experiment and I'm afraid didn't do a very excellent job with it. I'm looking forward to the next chance I have to put my new awarenesses to practice.

The second phenomena is trickier to describe, and even more subtle to grapple with. Any viable group, like the individuals that comprise its membership, is a unique entity with its own characteristic purposes, goals, rules, and style of going about its business. These characteristics are generated as an expression of the active participants, and like those of the participants, they will flow and grow and change and die and be replaced, and all this is fine. But quite often members will try to make the group a permanent thing, to keep it from changing, keep it the same. They will try to institutionalize it, for security.

But a group must be dynamic. It must continue to grow ( tho not necessarily in size) and progress to remain healthy, and neither of these processes occurs without some rocking of the boat. This must be expected and accepted with patience and faith. For to implement the forces which will prevent instabilities at all costs, will also suffocate and eventually strangle all life from the group. "The only difference between a rut
and a grave is their length." By accepting and expecting change, and by being willing to "go with the flow," you can nurture a group through a long, positive and productive life. This we understood better and it was what helped make our experience so successful.

The weather was almost ideal. Snorkeling and our Mexican friends were very pleasant, rewarding, and educational extras. Food was almost unbelievably good. (Usually, that is. The rest of the times it was just unbelievable.) No smog, no rushing around, no noise but the relaxing sounds of tumbling waves and an occasional cow, clean sand to roll in. All this brings to mind the parting words of Susan Weilbanks as we began our adventure, "You'll love it. It's paradise." And we can go back.

But I think I'll go forward. My next question is, can a larger group of people maintain a similar life, growth, and change in supportive environment for a more a extended period of time? Is there anyone interested in finding out with me?

KAT FELKNER

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Since Kat did not respond to our questionnaire, included here is the letter she passed out to Ed, Phyllis, Clint, and Al requesting their personal feedback to her at the end of their adventure together. It is a fine example of the care that each of the five participants maintained through their edur-vacation.

When this trip was in the planning stage I anticipated a learning experience that, because it was centered around the individual, would change my total outlook of life around me as well as my own [life]. It happened. I've allowed myself to "open up" to many insights about myself during this experience, but I'm sure there are many I've refused to consider as part of "me" or just overlooked entirely. You as an individual have been aware of and responded to "me and my style" in a different manner than anyone else.

If you would tell me what you saw, heard, and sensed of my "being" during the last three months (especially in personal relationships with others in and out of this group) I'll have more information to draw from in continuing my metamorphosis into a capable strong entity.

Include: traits, knowledge and skills I have or can obtain on which I can capitalize; traits I should learn to eliminate (especially in dealing with others); suggestions on how do grow "up and out." Also, is there anything you believe I can't, won't, or won't want to change but should for my own benefit? If so, denote why and as fully as possible the ramifications of doing so. (ie. What will it get me?)

Remember, this will be accepted as your opinion so don't limit what you have to say.

Also if there's anything you wish to say to me that does not fall into the above categories I'd appreciate hearing anything of your feelings.

Honesty is necessary if I'm to receive full benefit from your answers.

Remember: Believe nothing. Thanx.

Test everything. Kat
REFERENCES

This, by no means, intends to be a comprehensive bibliography for material contained in the previous pages. A far better guide, for those of you interested in further reading, is THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG, by Stewart Brand. The REFERENCES section is included here simply as an informal documentation of information sources. It consists of two parts. First is the list of books directly referred to or quoted from in the text, and second is the list of books, by author, title, and publisher, which accompanied us on our sojourn in Mexico.

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